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## **Schools in Australia: 1973-1998 The 25 years since the Karmel Report (Conference Proceedings)**

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# **Schools in Australia: 1973 – 1998**

**The 25 years since the Karmel Report**

**Papers from the conference organised by the  
Australian Council for Educational Research, 8 – 9 October 1998**

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# Schools in Australia: 1973-1998

The 25 years since the Karmel Report

8 - 9 October 1998

Holiday Inn Coogee Beach  
Sydney Australia



**T**he conference has been organised by the Australian Council for Educational Research to honour Professor Peter Karmel in his concluding year as Chair of the ACER Council and Board of Directors.

The Commonwealth Government became involved with school education in Australia in a new and major way with the establishment of the Australian Schools Commission in 1973.

Professor Karmel was Chair of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission which presented its influential report, *Schools in Australia*, in 1973.

This conference will examine developments in schooling in Australia since then.



# PROGRAM

**Thursday 8 October 1998**

**8.30 - 9.15**

Registration and coffee

**9.15 - 9.30**

**Opening Address**

*The Hon. Senator Christopher Ellison  
Commonwealth Minister for Schools,  
Vocational Education and Training*

**9.30 - 10.15**

**Paper 1: Reshaping schooling in Australia**

*Professor Peter Hill  
Professor of Education, University of  
Melbourne, and former Chief Executive,  
Victorian Department of Education*

This paper will review changes in the philosophy underpinning schooling in Australia from the liberalism of the 1970s, as expressed in the 1973 Karmel Report, to the managerialism of the 1990s, and reflect as well on the concomitant changes in programs and practices in schools.

**10.15 - 10.35**

Response

*Ms Lyndsay Connors  
Director of Equity Policy and Director of  
Higher Education, New South Wales  
Department of Education and Training,  
former Director of the Curriculum  
Development Centre and former Chair of  
the Schools Council, National Board of  
Employment, Education and Training*

*Professor Peter Tannock*

*Vice-Chancellor, Notre Dame University,  
member of the Interim Committee for the  
Australian Schools Commission and  
former Chair, Australian Schools  
Commission*

**10.35 - 10.45**

Discussion

**10.45 - 11.05**

Morning tea

**11.05 - 11.50**

**Paper 2: Equity in schooling**

*Professor Robert Connell  
Professor of Education, University of  
Sydney, and former Professor of  
Sociology, Macquarie University and  
Project Director for a major review of  
the Disadvantaged Schools Program  
from 1987 to 1990*

Concern about equity was a strong feature of the 1973 Karmel report. This paper will examine the impact of programs designed to enhance equity in schooling and assess the current position, in relation to socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, rurality, and Indigenous Australians.

**11.50 - 12.05**

Response

*Dr John Ainley  
Associate Director (Policy Research),  
Australian Council for Educational  
Research*

**12.05 - 12.45**

Discussion

**12.45 - 1.45**

Lunch

**1.45 - 2.30**

**Paper 3: The changing role of the Commonwealth in school education**

*Associate Professor Robert Lingard  
Faculty of Education, University of  
Queensland*

This paper will examine ways in which the role of the Commonwealth in school education has changed over the 25 years since the establishment of the Schools Commission. Consideration will be given to the increased level of collaboration among States and Territories in pursuit of a national rather than a Commonwealth perspective. A specific issue to be covered is the shift in emphasis from inputs and processes in the 1973 Karmel

report to outcomes in the 1985 Quality of Education Review Committee report (also chaired by Professor Karmel) and in more recent policy developments.

**2.30 - 2.45**

Response

*To be advised*

**2.45 - 3.15**

Discussion

**3.15 - 3.35**

Afternoon tea

**3.35 - 4.20**

**Paper 4: Management of schools: devolution of responsibility**

*Professor Brian Caldwell  
Professor of Education, University of  
Melbourne*

In its 1973 Report, the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission favoured less rather than more centralised control over the operation of schools. It held the view that responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling, in consultation with the parents of the pupils whom they teach and, at senior levels, with the students themselves. Professor Caldwell has been an important influence in recent years with regard to devolving responsibility to schools. In this session he will set out the basis for the policy changes with which he has been involved and discuss the benefits and risks, as he sees them, of the changes.

**4.20 - 4.40**

Response

*Ms Cheryl Vardon  
Director-General, Education  
Department of Western Australia*

**4.40 - 5.15**

Discussion

**7.00 - 10.00**

Conference Dinner

*Speaker: The Hon. Gough Whitlam AC  
QC, Former Prime Minister of Australia*



## Friday 9 October 1998

9.00 - 9.45

### Paper 5: Non-government schooling

*Ms Susan Pascoe*  
Co-ordinating Chairperson (Policy),  
Catholic Education Office, Melbourne

The Interim Committee supported diversity in schooling and expressed as one of its values the right of parents to educate their children outside government schools. The significant growth in non-government schooling over the past twenty-five years stemmed largely from the financial recommendations of the Karmel Committee. This paper will examine changes in the size of the non-government school sector over the period since the Schools Commission increased funding to non-government schools, and consider the current role and scope of the sector.

9.45 - 10.00

### Response

*Senator Lyn Allison*  
Education Spokesperson, Australian Democrats, and former teacher

10.00 - 10.40

### Discussion

10.40 - 11.00

### Morning tea

11.00 - 11.45

### Paper 6: The role of the teacher: teachers' work and professional development

*Mr Lloyd Logan*  
Director of Studies, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Queensland

*Ms Diane Mayer*  
Lecturer, Graduate School of Education, University of Queensland

Teacher professional development was a clear emphasis in the 1973 Karmel Report. This paper will examine changes in teachers' work

and in the status of the teaching profession and, in the light of them, assess current issues in teacher professional development.

11.45 - 12.00

### Response

*Professor Judyth Sachs*  
Professor of Education, University of Sydney

12.00 - 12.40

### Discussion

12.40 - 1.40

### Lunch

1.40 - 2.25

### Paper 7: Innovation in curriculum and pedagogy

*Professor Kerry Kennedy*  
Professor of Education, University of Canberra, former staff member in the Schools Commission and former President of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association

The 1973 Karmel Report recommended the introduction of an Innovations Program through which teacher reform initiatives could be supported. The Commonwealth government also established the Curriculum Development Centre. The paper will review the impact of those initiatives, and of subsequent cooperative activities among the States and Territories and the Commonwealth through the development of the national curriculum statements and profiles and the establishment of the Curriculum Corporation.

2.25 - 2.40

### Response

*Ms Jean Blackburn*  
Deputy Chairman, Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, and former Commissioner, Australian Schools Commission

*Dr Cherry Collins*  
Senior Research Fellow, Policy Research Division, Australian Council for Educational Research

2.40 - 3.20

### Discussion

3.20 - 3.50

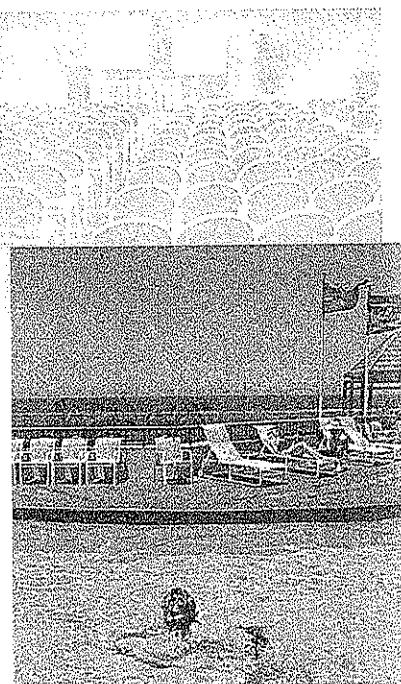
### Conclusion: Analysis and response: the way forward

*Emeritus Professor Peter Karmel*  
Former Vice-Chancellor, Australian National University and current Chair, Council and Board of Directors, Australian Council for Educational Research

In this final session, Professor Karmel will reflect on the issues raised in the conference and identify what he sees to be the main tasks now confronting those concerned with the development and implementation of schooling policies in Australia.

4.00

### Close



## **ACCOMMODATION**

Accommodation will be available at the Holiday Inn Coogee Beach at the special conference rate of \$165.00 per room per night (single), or \$185.00 per room per night (twin or double), including full buffet breakfast.

Accommodation for additional nights will be available at the above rate.

For bookings, please ring Reservations at Holiday Inn Coogee Beach directly on (02) 9315 7600.

Please state that you are attending the ACER National Conference, and advise Reservations of any special requirements that you might have, eg. dietary.



**ACER**

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ACER  
Private Bag 55  
Camberwell VIC 3124  
Tel: (03) 9277 5536  
Fax: (03) 9277 5500  
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The closing date for registrations is  
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# Reshaping Schooling in Australia

Peter W. Hill

Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne

*Paper presented to 'Schools in Australia: 1973-1998', a conference organised by the Australian Council for Educational Research to honour Professor Peter Karmel in his concluding year as Chair of the ACER Council and Board of Directors*

It is a very great honour indeed to be invited to present the opening paper at this conference to mark the concluding year of Professor Peter Karmel as Chair of the ACER Council and Board of Directors. It is a defining characteristic of great thinkers that they are ahead of their times and that it is often many years later that the pertinence and originality of their insights are appreciated. Peter Karmel has long been recognised by the educational community in Australia as its foremost thinker, but so much of what he recommended by way of change has been implemented only very recently and much remains still to be done.

Another of our foremost thinkers in education, my friend and colleague Professor Hedley Beare, has recently commented that if one wishes to see the future, we have to look no further than the present, because "the new is always emerging from the womb of the already existent"<sup>1</sup>. When we read the reports of the two key committees chaired by Peter Karmel, namely the 1973 *Schools in Australia* report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission<sup>2</sup> and the 1985 *Quality of education in Australia* report of the Review Committee<sup>3</sup>, we see with hindsight how these reports provide an uncanny glimpse into that future we now recognise as the history of Australian education in the last quarter of this century.

Peter Karmel's genius has been not only to accurately point the way ahead in education, but also to judge to a nicety what at any given point in time is achievable politically. The trust successive ministers have placed in him reflects his ability to make recommendations that will be accepted by and can be acted upon by governments. Unfortunately, ministers and governments have not felt able to extend the same degree of trust to other advisers, which probably explains why we no longer have Commissions, Boards and other advisory and statutory bodies shaping education at the national level.

What I propose to do in this paper is to provide an overview of the themes contained in the 1973 and 1985 Karmel reports and that will be picked up and dealt with more competently and in more detail by subsequent speakers. I will also attempt to relate these themes to the shape of schooling in Australia as it was when these reports were written, as it is now and as it may be in the future.

## Schools in Australia

The context in which the report of the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission was written is well known, coming as it did soon after the election of the Whitlam government and the dawning of a new era of Commonwealth involvement in

school education. As noted by Simon Marginson,<sup>4</sup> the Labor Party took office in 1972 with a pledge to increase commonwealth education funding and to put an end to the state aid debate. The Interim Committee's report provided the blueprint for a more active role of the Commonwealth in education and for the injection of substantial additional funds equivalent to 0.6 of one percent of the Gross National Product.

The focus of the first report was thus primarily on educational inputs, but within a clear framework of values that was as powerful, if not even more so, as the funds themselves in shaping developments in school education over the succeeding 15 years.

### ***Devolution of responsibility***

Devolution of responsibility has been a consistent policy direction of Australian school education over the past 25 years, taken up intermittently and supported by both sides of politics, although followed through to some finality only in recent years by conservative governments. There is no small irony in the fact that this core value, so enthusiastically embraced by right wing governments such as the incoming Kennett government in Victoria in 1992, was first mooted by the American Fulbright research scholar Professor Freeman Butts in his 1955 classic *Assumptions underlying Australian education*,<sup>5</sup> but was used as the first of the guiding values espoused by the Interim Committee advising Kim Beazley (senior) as Minister for Education of the Whitlam Labor government. What cannot fail to impress anyone returning to reread *Schools in Australia*, is the elegance of the prose and the clarity of the underlying thinking, which ring through with a relevance that is as strong today as in 1973:

The Committee favours less rather than more centralised control over the operation of schools. Responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling, in consultation with the parents of the pupils whom they teach and, at senior levels, with the students themselves. Its belief in this grass-roots approach to the control of the schools reflects a conviction that responsibility will be most effectively discharged where the people entrusted with making the decisions are also the people responsible for carrying them out, with an obligation to justify them, and in a position to profit from their experience. (§2.4, p.10)

The extent to which this core value has guided the evolution of our State education systems over the last 25 years is a matter which my colleague Professor Brian Caldwell will explore in much greater detail this afternoon. I will thus confine myself to a couple of observations.

First, it is only over the last few years that anything like true devolution of responsibility has occurred anywhere in Australia. There has been a general movement from *central control* to *partial devolution* through the largely unsuccessful strategy of regionalisation, to *self management* for day-to-day decision making with extensive delegation to school councils and often within a local district framework of supervision, to the first tentative steps towards *self governance*. However, even the degree of autonomy allowed by the Education (Self-Governing Schools) Act 1998 in the State of Victoria -- the State that has progressed further than any other down the



devolution path – is the extent to which schools are still circumscribed and subject to direction within centrally imposed and constrained frameworks of accountability. Indeed, for every move in the direction of devolution of responsibility there has been a countervailing centralisation of decision-making, particularly with respect to the curriculum, to assessment, to certification and most significantly to accountability.

A second observation is that devolution of responsibility means changing power relations and 'giving power to schools' is not as simple and pure as it sounds. In the Australian context, taking power away from the Education Departments has in the past invariably meant surrendering a great deal of it to teacher unions and parent organisations whose effect on schools has often been little different from and not necessarily any more benign than that of the bureaucracy. Though much reviled, John Chubb and Terry Moe's analysis in their book *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*<sup>6</sup> remains worthy of consideration. They promote the radical conclusion that the kinds of schools in which effective school organisation can be observed are those unencumbered by bureaucracy and that enjoy high levels of autonomy, namely schools in the private sector or those public schools in trouble-free environments which are able to operate successfully in spite of the system. They argue that control of schools by government agencies produces ineffectiveness and that this is an inevitable result of the democratic process, which subjects public schools to excessive administrative and political authority, makes them captives of democratic politics and subordinates them in a hierarchical system of control in which myriad interests and actors (notably unions, politicians and school professionals) use the rules, structures and processes of democracy to impose their preferences on the local school. In their book, the authors argue for a form of public choice or market model of educational provision, thus aligning themselves with those neo-conservatives who promote rational choice economic models as the basis for how governments should deliver services. And indeed it is clear that when it comes to devolution of responsibility, it is the neo-conservatives who have appropriated solutions first espoused by the 'left' in response to a somewhat different set of underlying values.

### ***Equality of opportunity***

The 1973 report of the Interim Committee drew attention to the injustices arising from inequalities in the distribution of wealth within Australian society and how those inequalities translate into unequal educational opportunities for different groups of young people. The report argued for equality of opportunity in terms that endorsed a compensatory model of funding:

The Committee values the principle that the standard of schooling a child receives should not depend on what his parents are able or willing to contribute directly to it, or whether he is enrolled in a government or a non-government institution. It believes that if incomes are to continue to be as unequal as they now are, there are good reasons for attempting to compensate to some extent through schooling for unequal out-of-school situations in order to ensure that the child's overall condition of upbringing is as free of restriction due to the circumstances of his family as public action through the schools can make it. (§2.7, p.11)

Professor Bob Connell and Dr John Ainley will be exploring this theme in much more detail later this morning. While there is evidence to suggest that opportunities and access have improved substantially, the impact of the plethora of compensatory programs initiated by the Schools Commission in the wake of the 1973 Karmel report did not significantly reduce inequalities in educational outcomes among different groups. Indeed, it could be said that a culture developed in which it was acceptable to label students and to entertain low expectations for certain groups of young people. The emphasis came to be placed on compensation and palliative programs rather than on prevention and intervention aimed at accelerating the rate of learning of 'at risk' students so that they could quickly attain minimum standards of competence in literacy, numeracy and other core learning essential to success at school.

On a more positive note, these programs can be said to have 'civilised' education and sensitised educators to their responsibilities for those with the greatest need, especially those children who are handicapped in various ways. The advances made in approaches to, thinking about and provision for students with disabilities and impairments were given an enormous impetus by the Interim Committee's report.

### *Diversity*

As a reaction to the uniformity that highly centralised bureaucracies often imposed on schools, the 1972 Karmel report adopted as one of its guiding values the valuing of diversity.

No single pattern is necessarily the best; diversified forms of schooling are an important part of the search for solutions. (§2.10, p.11)

This is an important reason for bringing responsibility back into the school and for allowing it to be exercised in ways which enable a hundred flowers to bloom that than to wither. All-round improvements are more likely to emerge from experimentation with different approaches than from centralised manipulation of change. (§2.10, p.12)

I expect Professor Kerry Kennedy, Dr Jean Blackburn and Dr Cherry Collins will have much to say about diversity when they address us tomorrow. Once again, I will offer only a couple of brief comments, the first of which is to the effect that diversity did indeed become a hallmark of the 'seventies and early 'eighties and these became exciting times of grassroots experimentation and innovation. But it is also evident that so many of the 'hundreds of flowers' envisaged in the first Karmel report bloomed for a short while, then withered on the stem. In essence, the conditions for sustained change and improvement were not present.

Diversity and innovation are indeed essential ingredients in the search for better ways of operating schools, but their effect can only be positive if there is rigorous evaluation of the extent to which they improve educational outcomes for students affected by them and if attention is given to developing the conditions, capacity and support for embedding proven innovations into the ongoing operations of all schools. Unfortunately the underlying message of total quality management long since embraced by sections of the corporate sector, and other approaches to sustained

improvement and change discussed by educators such as Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves,<sup>7</sup> remain to be taken to heart by education systems.

The other comment that I would make is that schools frequently complain that while in the past the Education Departments may have given rise to uniformity and lack of innovation, schools are now having to cope with *too much* change, most of it externally imposed and emanating from ministers wishing to pursue policy agendas and respond to external political pressures within the context of relatively short and unpredictable electoral cycles. In other words, we are now operating in times of much change, but not necessarily of more diversity.

### ***Private and public schooling***

The somewhat unique mix of public and private schooling and the decidedly unusual approach to funding these two sectors in Australia are the outcome of a set of tortuous debates that go back to the founding of public education in this country. Battles were fought over issues which have ceased to be so relevant. The Interim Committee had a mandate to lay some of the debates to rest and did so. In the process, they articulated a set of values that have held up fairly well over the intervening years.

The Committee values the right of parents to educate their children outside government schools.... It accepts the right of parents to choose schooling above the levels to which the Committee's recommendations are designed to raise government schools and non-government schools which are at present below them; it does not accept the right to public assistance to facilitate this choice. (§2.12, p.12)

They went on, however, to make a further statement that others at this conference will no doubt also wish to comment upon:

The Committee sees positive advantages in this drawing together of the public and private sectors, based, hopefully, on a greater degree of independence in government schools and not on a decrease in the independence now open to schools outside government systems...Such developments [joint planning and cooperation between sectors] when taken together with changed patterns of funding open up the possibility of the eventual development of a school system itself diverse, where all schools supported by public money can operate without charging fees. (§2.14, p.13)

My personal observation would be that it is increasingly evident that the adoption by school systems of rational, formula-based approaches to funding of schools in a context of devolved responsibility to schools for day-to-day decision-making is accelerating this convergence to the point where the terms 'government' and 'non-government' are anachronistic. The reality is that almost all schools are government subsidised, but with some receiving higher levels of subsidy than others. At the same time, given the universal distaste for high-taxing government, the concept of all schools being supported by public monies to the extent that they could operate without charging fees is one that now seems somewhat quaint and old-fashioned. Rather, the pressure is on to find ways of ensuring that those who choose to send their



children to government schools and who can afford to make some personal and direct contribution to the total costs of educational provision, be required to do so, as indeed applies in South Australia. This, of course, represents the final nail in the coffin of the original tenets of public education (i.e., 'compulsory', 'secular' and 'free') and is fiercely resisted by parent organisations, unions and many people in the community at large, who presumably wouldn't mind paying a GST well in excess of 10% to make free education a reality.

### ***Community involvement***

Here again, the Interim Committee present a guiding value that remains as valid today as when the words were first penned.

Unless our conception of education broadens to enable schools to forge closer links with other socialising agencies, the possibility of providing equal life chances for children from all types of social backgrounds is severely limited. (§2.17, p.13)

The committee imagined that there would be joint planning and even conduct of provision by educational, health, welfare, cultural and sporting agencies, thus forging new links and indeed partnerships between schools, homes and the local community. The reality is that even within education, links are often poorly developed between primary schools and pre-schools, and between secondary schools and primary schools. And while a number of useful programs promoting the role of parents and the school as partners in the education of children have been developed and implemented, the traditional parents' evening remains the dominant means of connecting teachers to parents, in spite of the evidence that such events invariably are not attended by the parents of the most 'at risk' students. As for linking up with other agencies, notions of full service provision have been talked about but seldom put into action. I know of just one school in Victoria that is currently seeking to make this a reality.

## **Quality of education in Australia**

The 1985 Karmel report, *Quality of education in Australia*, was written for a very different government and with very different terms of reference. After 30 years of economic growth the nation had, over the previous decade, experienced a sharp economic downturn, slow growth, inflation and high rates of unemployment. In this context, the Review Committee were asked by the Minister for Education, Senator Ryan, to examine the effectiveness of existing Commonwealth involvement in primary and secondary education with a view to assisting the Government to develop clear, more efficient strategies for directing its funds for school level education.

The report of the Review Committee points to a large number of directions for change that have exerted a considerable influence on schools in Australia and that continue to be important. For example, the report advocates the adoption of a single credential at Year 12, something which was picked up at about the same time by Jean Blackburn in her report on post-compulsory schooling in Victoria and became a main feature of the VCE reforms.<sup>8</sup> Another example is the Committee's advocacy for the de-zoning of

schools to give parents a greater say as to which school their child will attend. The report also makes important recommendations about funding programs for special groups, suggesting that these be broad banded and directed towards the achievement of a small number of specified and measurable outcomes. This is something that has happened progressively over the past decade or so.

However, the main thrust of *Quality of education in Australia* is to signal a change in emphasis from educational inputs to outcomes and to advocate the notion of competence and an emphasis on the primary school curriculum.

### ***Outcomes orientation***

The second Karmel report echoes thinking emanating from a number of OECD reports of the time that were explicit about the need to change thinking about education so that the focus is on the achievement of educational outcomes rather than on the level of inputs to the educational process. The Review Committee begin their report by explaining what is meant by an outcomes orientation.

The focus on outcomes may be contrasted with the concentration on increasing educational inputs which has been characteristic of the past 10 or 15 years. Clearly the effectiveness or efficiency of educational programs cannot be measured by inputs, but must be assessed in relation to outcomes. The deficiencies evident in educational provision a decade or so ago produced an emphasis on expanding resources as a means of improving outcomes – indeed the 1973 report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, *Schools in Australia*, was largely input oriented. Many of the deficiencies in resources noted by the Interim Committee have now been overcome. When new programs to improve school effectiveness are proposed, it is no longer sufficient to concentrate on inputs: outcomes must be explored. (§1.8, p.2)

The same approach is followed through with respect to equality, which the Review Committee redefine so that the focus is not so much on equality of opportunity but equality of outcomes for different groups.

The principle of equality of group outcomes is a means of testing whether greater equality of opportunity has been effective in improving the life chances of those from disadvantaged groups....The principle of equality of group outcomes assumes the distributions of the potential of individual members of defined social groups are the same. Greater equality of group outcomes is among the priorities of the Commonwealth Government. (§1.17, p.4)

This focus on outcomes and the attendant need for reliable and valid measures of the extent to which outcomes have been achieved has been one of the dominant themes of school reform in Australia and indeed internationally over the past decade. It is a theme that has been slow to permeate educational thinking and is still resisted in some quarters, but is increasingly becoming accepted as the most important change in thinking that must take place in order to improve the quality of schooling. In

particular, it underpins school accountability arrangements, is at the centre of national agreements about national benchmarks and performance targets in literacy and numeracy, and ongoing discussions about agreed national goals of schooling and associated targets.

### *Competence*

The dilemma confronted by the Review Committee in adopting an outcomes orientation was that of being specific about which outcomes schools should pursue. The report notes that there is no shortage of statements at the highest level of generality about the goals, aims or purposes of schooling, but there is no ready agreement about the details or about the priorities to be attached to different outcomes. In short, the Committee identified the enduring and endemic problem of the 'overcrowded curriculum'.

Realistically, schools cannot be expected to pursue successfully a broad range of sometimes internally inconsistent objectives. Neither can they be expected to achieve satisfactorily an increasing range of objectives not to encompass a steadily expanding curriculum. (§5.4, p.69)

Apart from resource limits, there are both human and physical limits to the amount of time the students themselves are able to devote to schooling and to learning processes. Even increases in the lengths of the school day and year and the average duration of schooling may not provide sufficient student time to permit schools to cover the extensive range of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which are from time to time proposed as school responsibilities. Where these limits are coupled with those of resource availability and human frailty, schools and school authorities must of necessity select the objectives they pursue and the vigour with which they pursue them. (§5.5, pp.69-70).

The problem of the 'overcrowded curriculum' and the lack of direction as to which objectives should be pursued with the greatest vigour has not dissipated since 1985. Indeed, with the adoption or adaptation of the curriculum frameworks for each of eight key learning areas developed as a result of national collaboration in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, the situation has been exacerbated. Schools refer to themselves as 'implementing the eight key learning areas' when in fact to achieve the outcomes listed for each key learning area for all students is a hopelessly impossible task. As a consequence, teachers find themselves constantly under pressure to 'cover content' and lacking the time to ensure mastery or to allow time for in-depth learning, thinking and creativity. Furthermore, these pressures within the formal curriculum relating to knowledge and skills, are compounded by similar pressures resulting from the amount of additional time needed to be devoted to extra-curricular activities such as parent communication, school governance, curriculum development and implementation, and student discipline and welfare.

Earlier this year, my colleague Ken Rowe undertook a DEETYA funded survey of all Australian primary schools in collaboration with the Australian Primary Principals Association. The survey was an investigation into the place of literacy and numeracy



in the primary school curriculum. The report of that survey has yet to be completed and published. The responses to two of a set of more than thirty questions exploring principals' perceptions of change in their school over the past three years amply confirms the reality of the phenomenon of overcrowding of the curriculum:

	1	2	3	4	5	
1. The curriculum has become <b>broad</b> er	38.6	40.6	11.5	8.8	0.4	The curriculum has become <b>narrow</b> er
25. There is <b>increased</b> external pressure to add more to the curriculum	64.5	26.9	6.8	1.5	0.2	There is <b>less</b> external pressure to add more to the curriculum

In brief, 79% indicated that the curriculum in their school had become broader and 12% indicated that it had remained the same, leaving just over 9% who felt that it had become narrower. More strikingly, 91% indicated that there is increased external pressure to add more to the curriculum.

The approach of the Review Committee to this problem, so evident back in 1985, was to advance the notion of 'competence' as the main goal of schooling. They defined competence as the ability to use knowledge and skills effectively to achieve a purpose and argued that priority be given to the pursuit of a set of five competences, namely those of: 1) acquiring information, 2) conveying information, 3) applying logical processes, 4) practical tasks, and 5) group tasks. The recommendations of the Committee regarding their notion of competences were ignored following the release of the 1985 Karmel report. But the concept re-surfaced in the report of the committee chaired by Brian Finn entitled: *Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training*<sup>9</sup> which recommended the development of a set of employment-related 'key competencies' for effective participation in the emerging patterns of work and work organisation.

The Finn 'key competencies' closely resembled the Karmel 'competences', but sadly their intellectual origins were not properly acknowledged and the ungainly and ungrammatical term 'competencies' entered the educational lexicon. The work of fully developing the concept was given to another committee chaired by Eric Mayer.<sup>10</sup> This committee advanced the concept to the stage at which it felt confident enough to advocate nationally-consistent assessment and reporting of individual achievement of seven Key Competencies described at three standards-referenced levels of performance. The seven were:

- Collecting, analysing and organising information
- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organising activities
- Working with others in teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology

Despite prompting from business and industry and acknowledgement by schools and the training sector that the Key Competencies represent important generic outcomes

of schooling, there has been little progress in implementing the recommendations of the Mayer Committee, although as I point out elsewhere, they can be found embedded within the specific criteria used by teachers to rate student performance on common assessment tasks within the Victorian Certificate of Education.<sup>11</sup> What has happened is that the concept of competence has been explored in relation to assessment and reporting at the post-compulsory level and in particular in the context of an emphasis on vocational education, but its relevance to determining priorities within the compulsory mainstream curriculum has not been given due attention.

A further significant suggestion contained in the report of the Review Committee is that priority should be given to primary education and in particular to ensuring all students meet minimum standards at an early age in literacy and numeracy. This is not a surprising suggestion given Peter Karmel's background as an economist and his familiarity with the findings of research on the economic benefits of education.

The Commonwealth should give high priority to primary education, if it wishes to improve students' subsequent transition from school to employment, or to higher education and other forms of education and training. A failure to master literacy and numeracy at an early age is likely to produce poor performance. Primary schools should place greater emphasis on ensuring that none of their students progress to the next phase of learning without having acquired adequate learning skills. (§14.38, p.192).

This is an emphasis that has gradually gained in momentum in recent times, prompted by Commonwealth policies on funding that emphasise literacy and numeracy and by the results of the *National School English Literacy Survey* of the literacy attainments of students in years 3 and 5 undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research and published in September 1997.<sup>12</sup> This report, like those of the 1975 and 1980 national surveys, generated more heat than light but provided compelling evidence that around 30 percent of students in Australian primary schools fail to reach draft minimum or 'benchmark' standards in reading and writing and that there is currently a 'learning gap' of at least five years of schooling between the top and bottom ten percent of students in each of the Years 3 and 5.

Returning to the recently completed survey of Australian primary principals, 77.6% of schools reported that the time devoted to English had increased a little or a lot in the initial three years of the primary school and 68.4% reported that the time devoted to English had increased a little or a lot in the last three years of the primary school over the past three years. This renewed focus on primary education is also evident at the national level in the agreement reached on literacy and numeracy benchmarks for Years 3 and 5 and on agreements about how each of the States and Territories will assess attainment of the nationally-consistent benchmark standards.

In conclusion, the second or 1985 Karmel report, no less than the first or 1973 report, signalled a number of directions for change that have proved to be influential in shaping debates about schooling over the intervening years to the present. In the final section of this paper a personal commentary is offered on the future shape of schooling in Australia in the light of the preceding discussion.

## **The future shape of schooling in Australia**

### ***Proposition 1: Devolution of responsibility***

Devolution of responsibility will continue as a guiding value for educational policy makers. This is because it builds on an important ethical principle, namely the principle of 'subsidiarity', which is broadly concerned with the limits of the right and duty of the public authority to intervene in social and economic affairs.<sup>13</sup> The origins of this principle can be traced to the Papal Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* delivered by Pius XI in 1931, but is given full expression in Section 93 of an Encyclical of John XXIII, which states as follows:

It is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. So, too, it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies. Inasmuch as every social activity should, by its very nature, provide a help to members of the body social, it should never destroy or absorb them.

In my view, there are no compelling reasons why schools that seek it should not have the authority to select and appoint their own staff, for example, or perform other functions that enable the school community to be self governing, while working within a system-wide framework that establishes frameworks for admission of students, minimum performance standards, certification, accountability and so on. Indeed, the sophistication and capacity of many if not most school communities is such as to make the withholding of such authority unjust.

### ***Proposition 2: Public versus private schooling***

Many, if not most, of the current distinctions between public and private schooling will disappear over the next few years and a single system for government funding of education for all children will be implemented that takes into account family income and capacity to make a personal, direct contribution, and which provides a 'free', high quality education for all on low incomes. This is likely to take the form of per capita funding that is directed to schools that have open enrolment policies, that agree to operate with agreed system-wide frameworks and are accountable for outcomes and expenditure of public monies to the parliament through the relevant minister for education. I know this is a notion that my colleague Professor Brian Caldwell has developed in his latest book, *The Future of Schools*.

### ***Proposition 3: Community involvement***

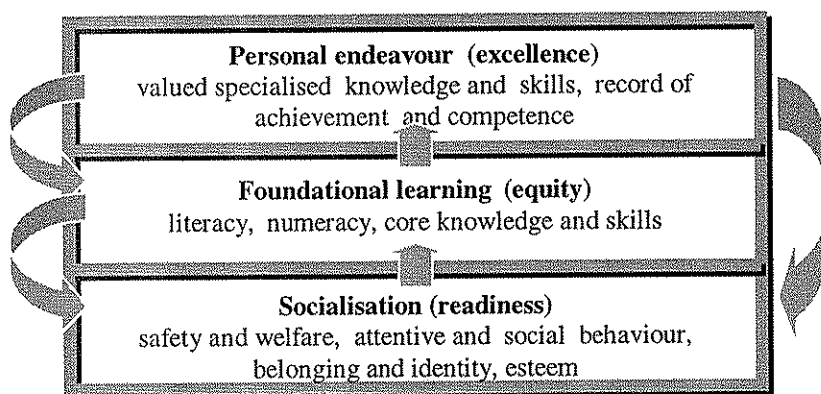
In the interests of rationalising and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of services for children and young adolescents, governments at all levels – federal, state and local – will implement full service models of provision located in school

buildings that promote community involvement and bring together the key agencies with a major stake in providing services for children and youth. In addition, as central departments of education become smaller with increased devolution of responsibilities to the school site level, so they will be merged into larger entities reflecting a full service model.

***Proposition 4: Outcomes orientation***

The outcomes orientation signalled in the second or 1985 Karmel report will remain the basis for education policy in the foreseeable future and will drive current initiatives aimed at developing, implementing and institutionalising national goals, targets and assessment programs in core learning areas. Increasingly, the standards underpinning national goals and targets will be benchmarked against international standards and world best practice, which is something that is not happening in a systematic fashion currently, although some important preliminary work has been undertaken.<sup>14</sup>

The problem of the overcrowded curriculum generated by ongoing external pressures to add more to the curriculum, confusion and debate about the purposes of schooling and a failure to establish clear priorities among different valued learning outcomes will be addressed. Ways of framing the curriculum that build on an understanding of student need will assist in making decisions about curriculum priorities, and will complement and help make better sense of ways of framing the curriculum based on the structure of knowledge and the structure of work. I have argued elsewhere,<sup>15</sup> that a useful starting point for alternative ways of framing the curriculum is provided by the work of Abraham Maslow, who saw human needs as hierarchically organised, with higher needs arising only as lower needs are met. The highest level of functioning occurs when a person is self-actualised, having satisfied lower-order needs.<sup>16</sup> Within the context of schooling, I believe that such a hierarchy involves at least three levels, as depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Three-level hierarchy of educational needs**

The first level entitled 'socialisation' concerns those fundamental preconditions for learning within the social fabric of the school. Schools must legally guarantee, first and foremost, the safety and welfare of the children entrusted to their care. Next, they must attend to the behaviour of students to ensure that they are able to attend to

learning and to interact with their peers and with the adults within the school in appropriate ways. Beyond that, they must inculcate among students a sense of identity and belonging within the school and a sense of personal self esteem.

The second level, entitled 'foundational learning' relates to those outcomes of schooling which provide the basis for all further learning. These are the 'competences' identified in the second Karmel report but which have been given somewhat more abbreviated labels in Figure 2, namely 'literacy, numeracy and core knowledge and skills'. These are the non-negotiable aspects of the curriculum that will be subject to ongoing external monitoring and accountability for meeting agreed targets.

The third level, entitled 'personal endeavour', relates to those areas in which students are encouraged to achieve excellence and which involve the acquisition of valued specialised knowledge and skills and the building up of a record of achievement and competence. This level is very much the area in which diversity and choice can be exercised. It is not expected that all students will become first-class performing musicians, for example, but in many schools opportunities will exist for this possibility to be realised by some students. Other students may achieve excellence in sport or in an aspect of technology, or in mathematics or in another language. Few if any schools are able to afford to provide the opportunity to achieve excellence in all areas and in no school is it reasonable to expect all students to achieve excellence in all areas. However, it is desirable that in every school, a range of opportunities exists to achieve true excellence and that as many students as possible experience what it is like to learn in depth and to perform to a level that stretches them to the maximum of their capabilities.

Figure 1 indicates that when students' needs at lower levels are satisfied, they are able to move to satisfy higher-order needs, but also that success at a higher level reinforces lower levels. My colleague Ken Rowe has shown using several large longitudinal data sets that when young children experience success in early literacy their attentiveness improves. In the past it has often been thought that attentive behaviour was a precondition for learning: Rowe's research indicates that the relationship between attentiveness and literacy is reciprocal, but that the effect of learning on behaviour is twice as powerful as the effect of behaviour on learning.

Another way of expressing the above is through the image of a tree, as shown in Figure 2. The roots represent the socialisation needs of students -- the hidden curriculum. The trunk and the branches represent foundational learning: they hold up the tree and provide its structure and strength. The leaves and fruit represent personal endeavour and are what give the tree its form and beauty. To extend the analogy, trees constantly shed their leaves and fruit is picked, but the trunk and branches remain and the tree grows new leaves and fruit. So too with learning. Foundational learning for the independent learner remains a constant, although continuing being refined and developed, whereas learners move on to achieve success in different things and in different areas at different points in time. By ensuring success in core learning, schools provide students with opportunities to achieve ongoing success in a wide range of areas.



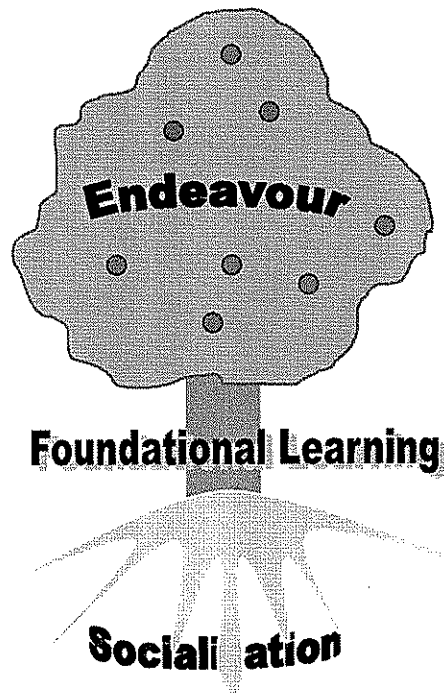


Figure 2. The tree analogy

***Proposition 5: Equality of group outcomes***

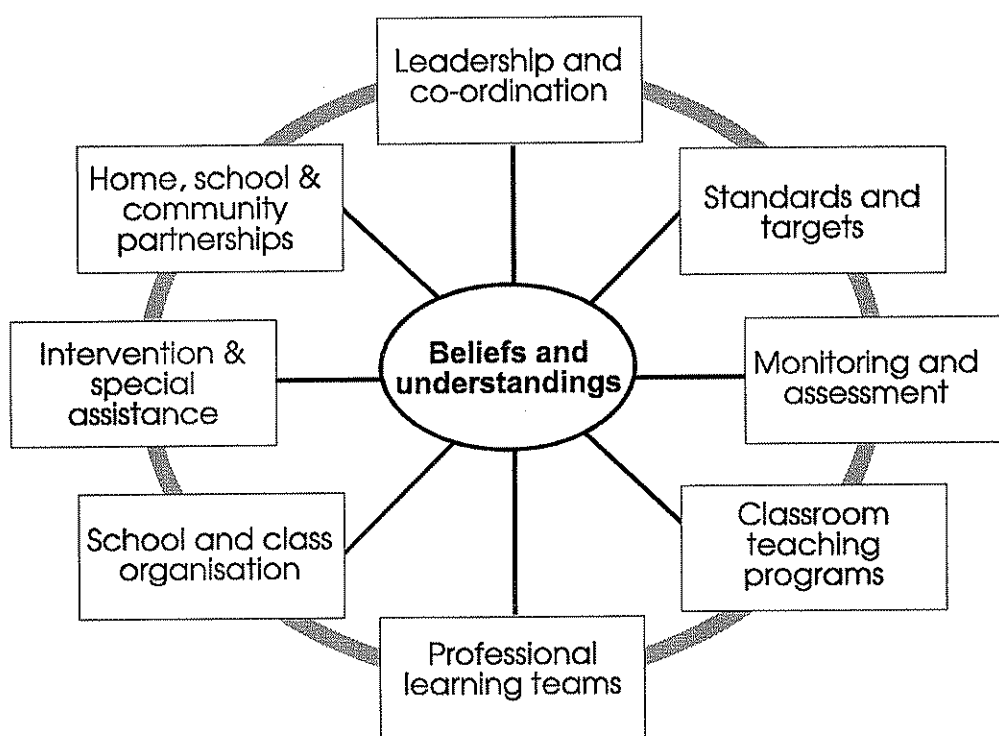
Schools will realise a restricted definition of equality that entails ensuring that (almost) all students, within the first two or three years of schooling, achieve minimum standards in core learning areas at levels that are high enough to enable success in later years of schooling. Policies in support of such a goal are already in place at the national level. In March 1997, the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs endorsed the goal that "every child commencing school from 1998 will achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years". Until now, it has not been considered possible to pursue such a policy with success, but there is now substantial research evidence to vindicate the adoption of policies based on a 'zero tolerance of failure' with respect to literacy.

Based on our work with large numbers of disadvantaged primary schools in Victoria, which has been directed towards achieving substantial improvements in literacy outcomes for students in the early years, my colleague Carmel Cr  vola and I believe that equality of group outcomes is achievable in terms of a definition based on the proportions of students reaching minimum standards.<sup>17</sup> Within the Early Literacy Research Project, dramatic improvements in early literacy outcomes have been achieved as the result of a whole-school, design approach to early literacy based on a model that emphasises:

- a belief in the ability of almost all students to achieve to a high standard given sufficient time and support;

- strategies that ensure high expectations and that maximise engaged learning time and teaching focused on the learning needs of each student;
- regular monitoring and assessment and the use of detailed information on students' literacy behaviours to drive teaching and learning; and
- the development of teachers' beliefs, understandings and professional classroom practice through intensive off-site and on-site professional development, the formation of professional learning teams and the use of mentoring, observation, demonstration teaching and visits to other schools.

The elements of this design model are summarised in Figure 3. The design also forms the basis of a further project, namely the *Children's Literacy Success Strategy*, which is being implemented in a large number of Catholic primary schools as a joint initiative of the Catholic Education Office and the University of Melbourne and which has the long-term goal of developing approaches that lead to substantial improvements in literacy outcomes across an entire system.<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 3. Design elements of a general model of school improvement**

Through the development, implementation and on-going refinement of such design approaches, it will become more possible in the future for schools to approximate the goal of equality of group outcomes. This is not to suggest that it will be possible to eliminate entirely the enormous gap that currently separates high and low achievers. But it does mean that windows of opportunity and the chance to achieve success at school and beyond are open to a much greater proportion of students, regardless of their home backgrounds.

***Proposition 6: Continuity and change***

There is no doubt that the values and directions contained in the two Karmel reports have exerted an enormous impact on the history of school education in Australia over the last decade of the twentieth century. In this respect, it is possible to see much continuity in the influences that have shaped our schools. At the same time, forces are at work that necessitate a constant re-assessment of these values and directions.

We know that superficial change is constant and source of stress within many schools. On the other hand, deep change and sustained improvement in education remain elusive.<sup>19</sup> Many of the important and desirable directions and outcomes signalled by the Interim Committee in 1973 and by the Review Committee in 1985 are only now becoming manifest in practice. But in the end, good ideas are irresistible. Peter Karmel has been present at the birth of so many that he is assured of a lasting monument in the form of a nation of schools that owe so much of their character to his benign influence. We salute him for this legacy.

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- <sup>1</sup> Beare, H. (1998). *Who are the teachers of the future?* IARTV Seminar Series No.76. Melbourne: IARTV, p.3.
  - <sup>2</sup> Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (1973). *Schools in Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
  - <sup>3</sup> Karmel, P. (Chairman) (1985). *Quality of education in Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
  - <sup>4</sup> Marginson, S. (1993). *Education and public policy in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
  - <sup>5</sup> Butts, R.F. (1955). *Assumptions underlying Australian education*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
  - <sup>6</sup> Chubb, J.E., & Moe, T.M. (1990). *Politics, markets and America's schools*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
  - <sup>7</sup> Fullan, M. with Stiegelbauer, S. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. London: Cassell; Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. New York: Falmer Press; Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (1991). *Understanding teacher development*. London: Cassell
  - <sup>8</sup> Blackburn, J. (Chairperson) (1985). *Ministerial review of postcompulsory schooling*, Report volume 1. Melbourne: The Ministerial Review of Postcompulsory Schooling.
  - <sup>9</sup> Finn, B. (Chair) (1991). *Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training*. Report of the Australian Education Council Review Committee. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
  - <sup>10</sup> Mayer, E. (Chair). (1992). *Putting general education to work: The Key Competencies*. The Australian Education Council and Ministers for Vocational Education, Employment and Training.
  - <sup>11</sup> Hill, P.W. (1995). Student assessment and the key competencies. *ACE News*, 14 (4), 8-9.

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- <sup>12</sup> Australian Council for Educational Research. (1997). *Literacy standards in Australia*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- <sup>13</sup> I am indebted to Graham Marshall who as a fellow member of the Education Committee chaired by Professor Brian Caldwell undertook an investigation into the derivation and meaning of the term 'subsidiarity'.
- <sup>14</sup> See particularly: Lokan, J., & Ainley, J. (1998) The Third International Mathematics and Science Study: implications for the development of numeracy benchmarks. *Unicorn*, 24 (2), 97-109.
- <sup>15</sup> Hill, P.W. (1995). Values and the effective school. *Journal of Christian Education*, 38 (2), 21-31.
- <sup>16</sup> See especially: Maslow, A. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper & Row; Maslow, A. (1971). *The further reaches of human nature*. New York: Viking Press.
- <sup>17</sup> For an evaluation of the initial stages of this project, see: Crévola, C.A.M., & Hill, P.W. (1998). Evaluation of a whole-school approach to prevention and intervention in early literacy. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 3, 133-157. For a brief description of the approach taken to early literacy improvement, see: Hill, P.W., & Crévola, C.A.M. (1998). Characteristics of an effective literacy strategy. *Unicorn*, 24 (2), 74-85.
- <sup>18</sup> See: Crévola, C.A.M., & Hill, P.W. (1998c). *Children's literacy success strategy: An overview*. Melbourne: Catholic Education Office.
- <sup>19</sup> See, for example: Sarason, S. (1990). *The predictable failure of educational reform*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

## EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

The issue of social justice and the practice of equity programs

from Schools in Australia to the present

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Australian Council for Educational Research National Conference

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## CONTENTS

### I. THE EQUALITY AGENDA IN "SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA"

1. Unequal education
2. The equality program
3. The inequality program

### II. FROM EQUALITY TO EQUITY

1. The design of equity programs
2. What equity programs have accomplished
3. What equity programs have not changed

### III. MARKETS AND JUSTICE: THE EQUALITY AGENDA NOW

1. Changed conditions
2. The decline of equity
3. Re-making the equality agenda



## I: THE EQUALITY AGENDA IN "SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA"

### 1. Unequal education.

Equality in education is a leading theme in Schools in Australia, from the statement of guiding values to the detailed funding proposals. There had long been Australian debates about the education of working-class children, and by the start of the 1970s there was a respectable amount of local research on educational inequality (Roper 1970, Connell 1972).

Nevertheless, Schools in Australia was unique among major policy documents in the attention it gave this issue. It is clear that the Interim Committee believed that a good school system had to be a just school system, and that justice in education had to be a national priority.

Schools in Australia offered several proofs that action was needed. The Report quoted statistics showing unequal educational outcomes for children of different class origins: in access to higher education, dropout from secondary school, reading skills and numeracy at primary level (chs 3, 9). The Report cited similar evidence of rural students dropping out from secondary school and underrepresented in higher education, and mentioned the disadvantage of Aboriginal and migrant children. (Some relevant evidence on these groups had been offered in the first Karmel report [Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, 1971, pp. 365-368].)

Most dramatically, Schools in Australia documented unequal resources. It described the differing facilities in a list of individual schools ranging from rich to poor (ch. 4). More systematically the Interim Committee tried to measure the income of schools ("quantum of recurrent resources used"). The measurement exercise mostly failed, but enough information came in to show that Catholic systemic schools had less average income than public schools, while elite private schools had spectacularly more (ch. 6).

### 2. The equality program.

The Interim Committee proposed, and the Whitlam government introduced, a response to these problems which I will call the "equality program". It had three main components.

Levelling up. First was a funding program that would use the financial power of the Commonwealth to level up the resources of schools across the country. This included short-term capital grants to remedy crisis conditions in the most run-down disadvantaged schools, and a long-term recurrent funding program designed to equalize the funding levels in different school systems.

These proposals, the largest-spending part of the equality program, were classic welfare-state measures. They relied on a concept of education as a common good, a shared social asset, from which flowed an obligation to bring all schools up to a common standard of provision. A striking feature of the recurrent funding was the "tapering" of grants to private schools, to focus the money on those with the least resources.

Compensatory education. The Interim Committee also proposed to deal with some failures of the welfare-state model, drawing on overseas examples of "compensatory education". Compensatory programs are targeted programs which respond to the "disadvantage" of a specific social group. They consist of interventions to compensate for some kind of deficit - whether in the group's resources, culture, or environment - intending to bring the group closer to some norm of behaviour or performance.

Schools in Australia proposed a "Disadvantaged Schools" program, intended as an educational intervention to break the cycle of poverty in economically disadvantaged areas. Though obviously based on ideas from Britain and the United States, the proposal had some distinctive local features, being more systematic than the British, and more dependent on local initiative than the American.

Stirring the pot. The Interim Committee recognized that the problem it called "equality of opportunity" was deep-seated, and would require continuing debate and investigation. The Report put further investigation of Aboriginal, migrant and rural education on the agenda of the proposed Schools Commission. The proposed funding mechanisms - tapered funding and the DSP - would also require a continuing research effort to measure socio-economic disadvantage.

These stimuli were successful. The Schools Commission, once established, did pick up these issues. Research and debate on the "index of Disadvantage" became very sophisticated (e.g. Ross et al. 1985). Indeed the Commission went further, and produced a world-class report on an equity issue barely mentioned in Schools in Australia, the educational situation of girls (Girls, School and Society, 1975).

### 3. The inequality program

The Interim Committee also recommended, and the Whitlam government (and subsequent governments) pursued, other measures which undermined the equality program. I will call this, for symmetry, the "inequality program". It had two main components.

Rescuing the private school system. In the postwar education boom, the Catholic mass school system fell into

financial crisis. The federal government rescued it, rather than funding the public schools to take up the overflow; and Schools in Australia was the decisive moment in the rescue. The \$179m recommended in grants to private schools rapidly grew; ten years later the Commonwealth government was spending \$676m on private schools, more than the Commonwealth was giving to all public schools combined, and vastly more than was being spent on the disadvantaged schools program. The "tapering" of grants was revised, and elite schools continued to benefit.

Since the Catholic system as a whole has a more socially privileged clientele than the public system as a whole, the overall effect of the grants may have been regressive (i.e. assisting the haves more than the have-nots). The new funds certainly underpinned the transformation of church schools into a market-oriented "private sector" in education. This had very large historical consequences, for it made possible the assault on public education by privatisers in the 1980s and 1990s, whose effects we are still feeling.

Maintaining the hegemonic curriculum. One of the Interim Committee's terms of reference was to consider "the diversity of curricula to meet differing aptitudes and interests of students". This was the only term of reference it did not fulfil. Indeed the Committee deliberately quit this field, remarking that since it did not run schools, it should not prescribe curricula (ch. 2). The result was that the expansion of education funding launched by the Report mostly reproduced, on an expanded scale, the existing pattern of curriculum.

The subject-based, competitive academic curriculum, held in place by competitive individual testing, was sometimes criticized at the time as inappropriate for working-class students. We can say something stronger: this curriculum is one of the root causes of social inequality in education. But it was hard in the 1970s to acknowledge that at a policy level, and is still hard now, given Australia's huge political and institutional investment in the competitive academic curriculum. The Interim Committee did not escape this dilemma.

So the policies flowing from the Report fought against each other. The larger dollar streams expanded the mechanisms producing educational inequalities, and the smaller dollar streams contested their effects.

## II. FROM EQUALITY TO EQUITY

In the fifteen years or so after the launch of the Schools Commission, the most striking feature of Australian work on social justice in education was the multiplication of compensatory schemes, which gained the generic name of "equity programs". Not all were Commonwealth programs, though the most visible were, such as the Participation and Equity program (Rizvi and Kemmis 1987). In this section I will discuss the design, achievements, and limits of equity programs.

### 1. The design of equity programs

Diversification. It is easy to forget that the Interim Committee proposed just one equity program, the program for disadvantaged schools. But the logic of compensatory education was portable. The notion of a targeted program providing extra resources could be applied to any group understood to be "disadvantaged". Targeted programs soon multiplied. For instance, the compensatory model interacted with the concerns of the new women's movement to produce a generation of targeted programs for girls (Yates 1993).

This diversification had a very important benefit. It allowed educational policy to recognize the multiple sources of educational inequality: not only class but also gender, ethnicity, and regional disadvantage.

But it also had an important cost: the fragmentation of policy, indeed of the idea of educational justice. The notion of the common good underlying the arguments of Schools in Australia has gradually been replaced with the idea of the needs of special groups. Some time in this evolution the extraordinary term "equity groups" was coined. The now-familiar list of candidates for compensation began to appear in policy documents: the poor, Aboriginal children, ethnics, girls, rural children.

Rather than being seen as a core component of the system's response to the systemic problem of inequality, compensatory programs came to be called "Special Purpose Programs". By the mid 1980s the concept of equity groups had become so muddy, and neo-conservatives so shameless, that the "gifted and talented" were appearing on lists of the disadvantaged, on the pretence that they were not being educated to their full potential. In the 1990s boys are being added to the list. With that, we seem to have reached the point where every child in school is regarded as disadvantaged.

Scale. The Interim Committee did some influential arithmetic of education. Disadvantaged schools were defined as those serving 15% of children in major urban areas and 10%

elsewhere; and the compensatory program was intended to raise those schools' income by about one-twelfth. It followed that the compensatory money would amount to approximately 1% of school systems' general recurrent funding. I believe this is the best the Interim Committee thought they could get, as a matter of practical politics.

Ten years later, in 1983, the disadvantaged schools program received about half of 1%. By then, of course, other equity programs had been added, one of which (Participation and Equity) was for a few years funded more generously than the DSP. But none of the new programs was significantly bigger, and most were significantly smaller. From the 1970s to now, Australian education systems have been responding to major systemic problems with miserable, marginal funding.

Centrifuging. The compensatory education model has an in-built tendency to "centrifuge" the problem: to locate both the cause and the cure out there with the disadvantaged rather than in here with the educationally successful. Educational inequality tends to be treated as a problem of deviance, not as an issue involving "the rest of the community", who provide the norm to which the disadvantaged group have not "conformed" - as the third Karmel report put it (Quality of Education Review Committee 1985, p.196). Thus: girls lack self-esteem, migrant children have the wrong language, country children are short of cultural capital, poor children have broken homes, disabled children lack skills and capacities, Aboriginal children lack whatever you like to believe.

The centrifuging tendency in compensatory education interacted with the marginal funding to create a situation where equity policy consisted of a bundle of small programs for minorities, operating on the margins of the institutional system of education. Thus, "socio-economic" disadvantage was treated as a problem about the very poor, rather than about the class structure as a whole; and the educational problems of the broader working class, who form the majority of the public system's clientele, were not addressed. Even girls and women were treated as a minority (which of course they are, among educational policymakers).

## 2. What equity programs have accomplished

These marginal programs proved remarkably fertile. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that much of the most imaginative and significant work in Australian schooling in the last two decades has occurred in, or has grown out of, these programs.

Local action. Partly because of the strength of Australian teacher unionism, and partly because of Schools in Australia's strong lead in the direction of decentralization,

compensatory education in Australia has mostly been run from below. It has emphasised teacher initiative and community involvement. Of course this has been contested by those who distrust teachers and communities, most recently by the federal government policy which has thrust a narrow "literacy" agenda onto disadvantaged schools.

Over the history of Australian equity programs, however, one must be impressed by the support that has been given to school-based initiatives. Literally thousands of locally-designed projects have been funded. Equity programs have played a part in breaking up the famously monolithic pattern of Australian schooling, have helped to empower classroom teachers and build connections between public schools and local communities.

Relevance. By decentralizing the program (locating project design at the school level, and stressing community involvement) Australian equity policy has, paradoxically, been able to fight against the centrifuging of the problem common in compensatory education abroad. In a crucially important turn, many initiatives have treated the "disadvantaged" not as deviant or lacking, but as a positive asset, a source of ideas and cultural resources. This approach has been vital in Aboriginal education, and has also been important in multicultural education and the disadvantaged schools program.

The turn towards a positive view of the disadvantaged often led to a critique of the existing mainstream curriculum, and to efforts at developing alternatives. These ranged from DSP attempts in the 1970s to construct a "relevant and meaningful" curriculum in working-class schools, to work in gender equity programs to construct "girl-friendly" curriculum and pedagogy in mathematics and natural science.

In the 1980s this approach led to efforts to construct a whole curriculum framework incorporating social justice principles and the educational experiences of disadvantaged groups. I count these among the most intellectually important fruits of the equity agenda: the "inclusive curriculum" approach in Victoria, and the "essential curriculum" project based on DSP experience in Sydney (Ryan and Davy 1990).

Learning networks. A striking feature of the disadvantaged schools program in practice was that it provided an institutional framework for an informal network of educational activists, both teachers and parents. In committees, conferences, projects and personal contacts, often by word of mouth rather than by publication, this network circulated information and experience, accumulated experience and passed it on to newcomers, and provided a base for policy debates and interventions (Johnston and White 1991).

Comparable networks have grown in gender equity work and in



Aboriginal education. In the absence of a training base in the universities, and with national leadership in equity work in decline, the programs themselves have provided much of the professional learning which has enabled equity work to be done.

Broader change. The indirect effects of equity programs are important, though they are hard to document. I would suggest as significant examples:

- The disadvantaged schools program pioneered a "whole-school change" approach, and an emphasis on parent involvement in decision-making, which have become important in other fields since.

- Equity programs, by emphasising school-based initiatives and empowering classroom teachers, laid foundations for the participatory approach to professional development increasingly taken up by teacher unions and modelled in programs like the National Schools Network.

- The critiques of narrowly academic tests and examinations made by activists in the disadvantaged schools program have fed into reforms of secondary assessment, most notably into the design of the Victorian Certificate of Education.

- Aboriginal education programs and materials have aided the rising visibility of Aboriginal culture. Multicultural education programs have highlighted cultural diversity for young people. It is notable that young people - the group Noel Pearson has called the "young reconcilers" - have been prominent in recent protests against racism.

At the system level, then, equity programs have been an important source of renovation. We should not undervalue this effect, in a period when public education has been under so much hostile pressure.

### 3. What equity programs have not changed

Basic social relationships. The equality agenda was built on the correct assumption that social conditions affect educational outcomes. But compensatory programs have never had the capacity to change those social conditions. Teachers in the DSP have often faced rising levels of child poverty in their communities, and where that happens the program can seem little more than a band-aid.

Over the lifetime of gender equity programs, girls' and young women's educational access and achievement has indeed risen relative to boys and young men. But that change was well under way when gender equity programs began, and probably has

more to do with long-term labour market changes than with the educational interventions.

Over the lifetime of Aboriginal programs, participation in upper secondary and higher education has increased dramatically. Here we can credit, in part, the educational interventions. But outside the schools, Aboriginal unemployment and poverty remain at horrifying levels, and Aboriginal health remains a disaster area. It is not surprising that Aboriginal children as a group have the most trouble with the education system, and their overall participation and access rates remain comparatively low.

Mainstream pedagogy. Though practitioners in equity programs have often wished to change the school system as a whole, equity programs themselves have never been in a position to produce system change. This is partly because of their small scale, and partly because they are defined as "special purpose" programs. Equity programs have not been in a position to contest the major constraints on pedagogy, which are the routine institutional arrangements in school systems, and the competitive, university-oriented assessment and credentialling system.

During the lifetime of equity programs, the schools' main technique for changing pedagogy, system-based in-service education (the subject of a chapter in Schools in Australia), has declined. At the same time the gradual commercialization of university-based in-service education (with up-front "full-cost" fees) has tended to drive equity issues out. One cannot market service to the poor in the way one can market computer skills.

### III. MARKETS AND JUSTICE: THE EQUALITY AGENDA NOW

#### 1. Changed conditions

Social conditions have changed in many ways since Schools in Australia was written. The overall inequality of income and wealth in Australia has probably grown. The scale of child poverty has certainly grown. A high level of unemployment has become a permanent feature of the economy. Women's participation in the wage economy has grown while new forms of occupational segregation have appeared. Migrant groups have diversified into different patterns of assimilation and segregation. The land rights movement has given a degree of power to some Aboriginal communities but has also become a focus of racist backlash.

Australian manufacturing has declined, and so has rural work. Service occupations have grown, and certain knowledge-based

industries (such as computing and telecommunications) have expanded. The commercial mass media have become more concentrated, more influential in the culture, and more vehemently conservative.

Most directly important to equity programs, there has been a major shift in the ideological context of policy-making. The equality agenda of Schools in Australia was a mixture of welfare-state measures and attempts to push beyond the limitations of the classical welfare state. By the 1980s this political framework was obsolete. The Australian ruling class withdrew its commitment to the Keynesian class compromise that had been brokered by Menzies in the 1940s and 50s, and joined the shift to a "hard" free-market agenda occurring across the capitalist world under the leadership of Thatcher, Reagan, Kohl and the IMF.

The main political agenda now was not to repair the welfare state, but to dismantle it: by reducing public services, deregulating the economy, privatising public institutions, and lowering income taxes. Right-wing Labor governments, both state and federal, slowed this trend but ultimately embraced it - panicked by globalization. The trend has of course accelerated under the Howard government.

It has been well observed that the market agenda is not so much a policy as a "meta-policy", a framework which overrides the specifics of different policy areas. Among the results for Australian education are the prioritization of "training" over education, the creeping privatisation of Australian universities, the increased subsidising of private schools as a half-step towards vouchers, the continuing attempts to turn public schools into enterprises and principals into entrepreneurs, the invasion of public education by corporate advertising, the corporatisation and fragmentation of TAFE, the shift of research funding towards marketable products and processes, the adoption of business management practices in public education, the "outsourcing" of educational research and development.

The balance between public and private sectors on which Schools in Australia rested has been shattered. Right-wing theorists are now talking of "a private education for everyone", that is to say, having no public education institutions at all. We are still a long way from that point in practice, but no-one should be in any doubt about where the market agenda is headed.

We are now, for the first time in Australian history, invited to contemplate a school system operating without any concept of the public interest. It is worth taking a moment to reflect on the consequences for social justice. This is what such a system would look like:

Schools are firms, marketing their services to individual buyers. Individual buyers are trying to maximize their personal advantages, or to realize their personal "tastes". Standardized competitive tests dominate the curriculum, because they are both a key marketing tool (schools' results are published) and the arbiter of success in competitive selection. Teachers become either contractors, earning success fees according to how many students they get through the next stage of selection; or deskilled routine workers implementing "teacher-proof" curriculum packages devised by commercial publishers. All schools are selective, but only some can make use of that fact. The successful ones use their power of selection and exclusion to enforce discipline, uniform, and compliant behaviour, because that is preferred by "the market", i.e. those families able to pay the highest fees. Those schools which "fail" become sink schools, with a high proportion of poor families, troubled children, and ethnic minorities.

## 2. The decline of equity

From the early days of compensatory education, American programs were criticized on the grounds that they stigmatized the targeted group. Australian programs have been less criticized on that ground, but have been vulnerable to a funding squeeze. In the 1980s, with the early stages of public sector downsizing under way, equity programs came under pressure to justify themselves in terms of cost-effectiveness. This they found difficult to do, since they were tackling large problems with small funds, and the evaluation models preferred by the new style of public-sector managers were not particularly appropriate to the programs' design (Connell, Johnston and White 1992).

In the controversy around the third Karmel report, Quality of Education in Australia, equity programs lost ground - despite the growing political concern at that time with the issue of child poverty. Since the end of the Participation and Equity program, compensatory education has failed to thrive financially. Successful recent initiatives, such as the National Strategy for the Education of Girls and the national Gender Equity framework, have been low-cost.

The programs further suffered from a collapse of national leadership in equity issues. This depressing story includes the disappearance of national coordination for the DSP, the failure to build mechanisms for the exchange of experience and materials around the country, and the eventual destruction of the Schools Commission itself - under a Labor government.

Among the long-term consequences of that action was the silencing of the most important national voice speaking for

educational equity across the board. Since then, particular programs have achieved a national presence, most successfully the gender equity program; and particular groups have spoken in favour of action for the disadvantaged, notably the Australian Council of Social Service. But there has been no centre where the issues could be spelt out and worked through.

The Schools Council of NBEET, for all the talents of its people, has not been an effective substitute and doubtless was never intended to be.

This has been particularly regrettable as in the 1990s equity programs have been subjected to a new kind of attack, this time on the definition of disadvantage. One Nation's claim that Aboriginal people are privileged, not disadvantaged, may appear an impressive achievement in the Big Lie department. But there is no doubt that the Hansonite attack on targeted programs as unfair to non-Aborigines has been politically effective with a certain constituency and has not been effectively answered by the responsible government. Similarly the boys' education lobby that emerged in the early 1990s has got spectacular publicity for its claims that boys are now the disadvantaged gender in schools.

More broadly, equity programs have been vulnerable to the erosion of the cultural basis on which they were first built - the idea of education as a common good. The rise of the market agenda has undermined all policies built on concepts of the public interest pursued through collective action.

Here the fragmentation of equity programs and the incoherent list of "equity groups" has come home to roost. It is not difficult for hostile critics to present any targeted program as a special deal for a particular lobby group, reflecting influence and "political correctness", not need. You might think this argument would be difficult to apply to poverty, but you would be wrong. New-Right commentators began some years ago to complain about a "welfare lobby", and I notice this phrase now appears without embarrassment in the mainstream press.

### 3. Re-making the equality agenda

I believe that the era of equity programs has come to an end, and that we have not much more to expect from the logic of compensatory education, in all its varieties. At the same time we all know that the problem of injustice in education has not been solved. When people today do the kind of exercise that the first and second Karmel reports did, mapping educational outcomes against measures of social inequality, the familiar patterns still emerge (Mukherjee 1996).

I am further convinced that this is not just a problem for the "disadvantaged". Perhaps the greatest weakness of

compensatory education was its centrifuging tendency, the way it turned our eyes away from the education of the privileged.

I consider that a privileged education is, by the very fact of privilege, a corrupt education. For too long we have let the privatisers persuade us that there is something admirable about grabbing more resources than your neighbour has. An education designed to select and exclude, and to give advantages in this selection and exclusion, undermines the moral basis of communication, culture and social life.

To respond to the damage inequality has done to all education, as well as responding to the needs of the excluded, requires something bigger and better than a set of small targeted programs. It requires a new equality agenda. We must, again, think on the scale of Schools in Australia, though with the benefit of these 25 years' experience, and in response to the changed situation.

To design a new equality agenda will be the work of many hands, not one morning's discussion. It may still be useful to propose some general ideas: first some principles, then some mechanisms (focussing, as Schools in Australia did, on what can be done at the national level).

#### (a) Principles

A focus on inclusiveness. We need to focus educational thought, not on competition, selection and therefore exclusion, but on how the educational enterprise can be made fully inclusive. The problem is how the large commitment of social and economic resources that an education system represents can be made to serve equally well all of the diverse Australian population, being fully inclusive along all the dimensions of difference that the equity programs have identified. Equality of service, rather than equality of opportunity, is perhaps the key to a new way of thinking.

A focus on curricular justice. Rather than compensating for deficits among special groups, the problem is to reconstruct mainstream curriculum and pedagogy so they genuinely serve the full spectrum of students. This task, which I call the pursuit of "curricular justice" (Connell 1993), has been implicit in many initiatives ranging from school-level DSP projects to the VCE. I would argue it must become the centre of the equality agenda in the next generation.

Professional reconstruction. Since teachers are the main workforce of reform, the reconstruction of teaching, as a profession and as a labour process, is vital for an equality agenda. Educating a diverse student population, in conditions of inequality, must be regarded as a core professional skill of teachers. The means by which the work of teaching is reshaped matters a great deal; a deskilled teaching workforce



will not be effective in the pursuit of curricular justice.

Re-invigorating public institutions. The key to the long-term promotion of equity is the recognition of a common interest in a just education system. Through the 1980s and 1990s education has shared the troubles of a declining public sector, and renewal in education partly depends on a wider revival of ideas of the common interest and collective action. Even a couple of years ago this might have seemed utopian. But in many parts of the world we can now see this revival beginning, as more and more countries reject the hard-line free-market agenda.

#### (b) Mechanisms

A national charter of rights and justice in education. Fine words butter no parsnips. Yet a carefully designed statement of principles, spelling out a commitment to equality and the reasons it is valued, can be an important point of reference for teachers and parents as well as policymakers. State systems are producing such documents, and we need debate over their ideas and language.

Participatory national policy development. The problems of educational inequality are nationwide (ultimately, of course, global), and require inter-system agreements. Yet it is important that agreements be reached through a wide process of consultation. The development of the national Gender Equity Framework provides a relevant approach.

A curriculum renovation program. Curricular justice is not achieved once and for all, since curriculum itself changes and develops. A continuing national curriculum development process, with a commitment to inclusiveness, is the best way of mainstreaming the issue of curricular justice.

A school/community renovation program. The approach central to the DSP and some other equity programs, whole-school renewal based on community participation, can be generalized and made continuous. The basis of such a program is to use the limited additional funding to support redesign of the uses of the regular recurrent funding.

A teacher development fund. Re-designing the labour of teaching, renewing in-service education, and shaping pre-service education to support a fully inclusive approach, are tasks that also need national action and at present lack a stable funding base. Since both higher education and school systems must be involved, a different financial mechanism will probably be needed.

A national centre for social justice in education. National programs should not be controlled by fiat from the centre. But they certainly need a national centre, through

which ideas, information, experience and people can be circulated, where emerging needs can be defined and exploratory work stimulated, and where the diverse enterprises that pursue equity issues can come into contact with each other.

An inequality monitor. We have the techniques to measure many aspects of inequality in Australian education, and relevant statistics are published by many bodies. Nowhere is this done both regularly and comprehensively. A monitoring project which drew the diverse information together into annual or biennial reports (comparable to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Australia's Health), would be relatively inexpensive and could have important effects both on institutions and on public consciousness of the issues.

The suggestions just listed are far from a completed program; I offer them simply as themes for discussion. But I also hope to make an important strategic point. Action to promote equality in education, and therefore also the quality of education as a whole, is by no means pie in the sky. It is a practical proposition for the immediate future. We have methods available. What is needed to set them in motion is public commitment and political will.

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**Federalism in Schooling since the Karmel Report (1973), *Schools in Australia***

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## Federalism in Schooling since the Karmel Report (1973), *Schools in Australia*

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### Introduction

Until the implementation of the recommendations of the Karmel Report, *Schools in Australia* during 1973 and 1974 the Commonwealth's involvement in schooling had been very much of a specific purpose kind and somewhat *ad hoc* in character, driven by considerations of political pragmatism. The best exemplars of this are probably the Commonwealth Science Laboratories (1964) and Commonwealth Libraries (1968) introduced by Coalition governments. The same could be said, however, of the tentative moves, prior to the election of the Whitlam government in December, 1972, towards the introduction of recurrent and capital grants for non-government schools and the first step towards capital grants for government schools (1969). At the time of the election of the Whitlam government in December 1972, the Commonwealth did not provide recurrent grants for government schools. The Whitlam government rectified this latter situation and fully systematised the Commonwealth's role in schooling, introducing a portfolio of seven programs, including recurrent grants for both government and non-government schools on a needs basis, capital funds, library funding for both primary and secondary schools, the disadvantaged schools program, the special education program, teacher in-service and education centres, and an innovations program. This was not an *ad hoc* intervention - the articulation of seven programs constituted for the first time in Australian political history a systematic approach by the federal government to schooling; it was, nonetheless, an approach still driven by politics. For instance, Whitlam utilised the introduction of needs-based funding of non-government schools to solve the so-called 'state-aid' debate within the Labor party itself, and perhaps within the broader polity.

In a sense, this systematisation of the Commonwealth's role marked the high point and the beginning of the end of the social democratic Keynesian settlement of the post war economic boom years. This is so despite the continuing contradictory articulation of such a social democratic vision of schooling by the Schools Commission, a statutory authority established by the Commonwealth following the Karmel Report, well into the early eighties and probably until its demise in 1987 under Minister Dawkins (Johnston 1983). Whitlam (1985) has argued in his account of his government's achievements, as well as in speeches in parliament during the fifties, sixties and seventies, that the federal government had to be involved in funding the three sectors of education (schools, TAFE and higher education) so as to ensure equality of educational opportunity for all because of the greater fund raising capacity of the federal government *vis-a-vis* that of the States and because education was a matter of national concern. Whitlam has observed regarding the systematisation of the Commonwealth's role in school funding and policy making: 'For the first time, national resources were harnessed for the express purpose of providing adequate standards in education. For the first time, all students could expect to achieve equal opportunities in education'. He has also noted 'The most enduring single achievement of my government was the transformation of education in Australia' (1985, p.315). His government certainly transformed federal/State relations in schooling and formed the frame for subsequent developments and rearticulations.

Federalism is a target of politics, a political structure upon which politics are played out and is also a mediating factor, *a la* the arguments of the German social theorist Offe (1975), of what gets onto the political and policy agendas in education and how these issues are dealt with. Changing political contexts affect these workings of federalism generally and specifically in schooling, as well as Party

political stance, and this has been the case since the Karmel Report. Thus the systematisation of the federal government's involvement in schooling set the frame for subsequent developments. The *ad hocery* of the Commonwealth's involvement prior to Whitlam and Karmel has gone, probably forever. This is evident, for example, if one takes the most recent *National Report on Schooling* (1996) - here we see an extensive and systematic involvement of the Commonwealth in schooling. It is interesting, though, that 117 pages of a 246 page document are taken up by reporting on a 'National Overview' of schooling followed by separate reports by both the States (and Territories) and the Commonwealth; a clear distinction is made in that Report between Commonwealth and national approaches and programs. This is an important semantic and political distinction and was one first articulated in the first National Policy in schooling, *The National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools* (1987) developed during the period of the Hawke Labor governments. That policy statement adumbrated the distinction, noting, for instance, that a national policy addresses matters of concern to the nation as a whole; adopts a comprehensive approach; is based on principles of collaboration; and involves commitment and agreement from a number of parties (including the States, Territories and Commonwealth).

There is a necessary distinction between *Commonwealth* and *national* policies in education. Commonwealth policies relate specifically to the objectives of the Commonwealth Government, such as those addressed through the Commonwealth's general resources programs and its specific purpose programs. In contrast, a *national* policy in education addresses matters of concern to the nation as a whole in which a comprehensive approach to policy development and implementation is adopted by school and system authorities across the nation. A national policy, based on principles of collaboration and partnership, necessarily involves commitment and agreement from the various parties responsible for schooling, including Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and non-government school authorities (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1987, p. 11)

At the time of the Whitlam and Karmel systematisation of the federal government's involvement in schooling there was no such distinction; there were Commonwealth policies and programs and those of the States and Territories. National policies in schooling proliferated during the Dawkins period (1987-1991) as federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett and Knight, 1995). Such policies were framed by a vastly different political context from that of the 1973 Karmel Report, notably, one of globalisation and related meta-policy status granted to economic restructuring and internationalisation of the Australian economy and labour force, within a post-Keynesian framework and global dominance of market liberal ideology. In that context, federalism became an important focus of politics itself in an attempt to create an efficient national economic infrastructure, for example in Hawke's 'new federalism' of the early 1990s and the complementary work of the Special Premiers' Conferences (SPCs) and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) (Painter, 1998). In schooling, one response was a move to national policies achieved through politicking and consensus at the intergovernmental council in education - the Australian Education Council (AEC 1936-1993) and later the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA 1993- present). However, Commonwealth Programs also continued in addition to national policies

Whitlam's argument for an enhanced Commonwealth involvement turned on the reality of 'vertical fiscal imbalance', the fact that the Commonwealth had greater fund raising capacity than the States following the taking over of income tax raising power by the Commonwealth from the States in 1942. However, there was also a broader political justification of social democratic kind: the link between the Commonwealth's funding capacity and a commitment to equality of educational opportunity for all students irrespective of which State they lived in and irrespective of whether or not they attended a government or a non-government school. Education, including schooling, was

thus seen as a matter of concern to the nation and this concern was made manifest and expressed through general recurrent and capital funding for all schools and through a number of targeted programs (for example, special education and the Disadvantaged Schools Program) which were linked to social justice considerations. Since that time developments in Commonwealth/State relations in schooling have been framed by the approach created by Whitlam and Karmel. They have, however, also been rearticulated in the changed political context of globalisation and post-Keynesian politics, as well as being mediated by the particular ideology of the federal government at any time - compare and contrast here, for example, Hawke/Keating Labor (1983-1996) with the Howard Coalition government (1996-present).

The argument of this paper is that the Whitlam government via the implementation of the recommendations of the Karmel Report systematised the Commonwealth's involvement in schooling, beyond the *ad hocery* which had preceded it; this was change of a qualitative rather than incremental kind. This systematisation set the frame for subsequent developments, certainly in relation to the structure of Commonwealth programs. It will be argued that the Dawkins period as federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training (1987-1991) during the Hawke era instigated another level of qualitative change beyond that set by the Karmel frame; this was the move towards national policies which were achieved through consensus and collaborative work at the intergovernmental council in education - the AEC until 1993, MCEETYA subsequently. The context for this move was the globalisation of the economy within a post-Keynesian framework and the dominance of market liberal ideological which witnessed a restructured managerialist, competitive and performative state apparatus, along with the ministerialisation of policy production (Knight and Lingard, 1997). Just as federal/state relations in schooling changed incrementally during the Fraser years of 'new federalism' (1975-1983) and were mediated by Party ideology - federalism versus centralism and greater priority to parental choice in schooling as opposed to the Whitlam emphasis upon equality - the same is the case for the current Coalition era (1996- present). However, despite much talk during the 1996 election campaign and the arguments proffered in the National Commission of Audit, which the Coalition established immediately after winning office, for a return to a more 'coordinate' style of federalism (Matthews, 1977), Federal government involvement in schooling has remained. It has, nonetheless, been driven very much by Party ideology.

This paper will argue further that the reality of vertical fiscal imbalance, that is, the greater revenue raising capacity of the Commonwealth and the greater functional responsibilities of the States, means that such a Commonwealth presence in schooling will remain, as long as this is a feature of Australian federalism and as long as education is deemed to be an essential element of policies geared to the 'national interest', in what ever way that might be defined. And a narrowing of that definition along with a reducing conception of schooling's role in relation to it has been a feature of the period since Karmel (1973). However, this paper will also argue for the necessity of Commonwealth involvement for the very reasons articulated by the Whitlam government. It will also be demonstrated that issues at the core of the Karmel Report remain central in contemporary schooling policy, for example questions of equality and diversity, state-aid, appropriate relations between the Commonwealth, the States and the schools, the role of teachers and teacher professional development, school/community relations, and models of devolution. They have all been rearticulated in the change from the high point of progressive Keynesianism of the Karmel Report with its emphasis upon increasing inputs to schools to the post-Keynesianism settlement in its various manifestations under Labor and the Coalition. This seeking for a new settlement has been concerned much more with outputs and outcomes than with inputs - the leaner and meaner state emphasising efficiency and effectiveness - and is linked to the breakdown of economic nationalism and an emergent consensus about the way nations ought to respond to globalisation (Brown, Halsey, Lauder and Stuart Wells (1997). The second Commonwealth Karmel Report *Quality of*



*Education in Australia* (1985) was an important signifier as well as precursor of this move from an emphasis upon inputs to outputs.

### **The Constitutional and Political Situation of Federalism and Schooling**

Australian federalism works politically as well as Constitutionally. This is an important point in understanding the changes in federal/State relations in schooling since the Karmel Report of 1973; it is also an important observation in understanding the Whitlam reforms. The idiosyncratic character of Australian federalism with its endemic vertical fiscal imbalance is also very important in analysing the changing politics of federal/state relations in schooling. As Whitlam (1985, p. 711) has noted in respect of his government's reworking of federalism in its short incumbency, finances in Australian federalism are weighted much more in favour of the federal government, while functions are weighted in favour of the States (and Territories). This is the central axiom of federalism in schooling: crudely, the Commonwealth has the capacity to buy the compliance of the States and Territories, while the latter sit in a permanent mendicant relationship to the Commonwealth. Expenditure on schooling constitutes about one quarter or more of the expenditure of State governments. In research I have done with colleagues on federalism and education, specifically on the intergovernmental council in education - the AEC and subsequently MCEETYA - we found, and perhaps not surprisingly, that schooling, along with hospitals and police, appeared to be central to the states' self-definitions, and policy domains which they wished to jealously protect (Bartlett, Knight, Lingard and Porter, 1994; Lingard, Porter, Bartlett and Knight, 1995; Lingard and Porter, 1997). However, in the post-Keynesian period of leaner and meaner policy approaches the States also found themselves more dependant upon federal financial support and open to a range of national policy approaches in schooling for cost-efficiency reasons. It is that context which witnessed the development of a range of national policies during the Dawkins period (Lingard et al, 1995), along with a continuation of Commonwealth funding and programs the basis of which had been established by Whitlam and Karmel; it is also probably that situation which has seen the States accept Minister Kemp's drive for national literacy testing and the development of literacy benchmarks. It is this complex interplay of the Constitutional and political in federalism in schooling which has framed developments since Whitlam in the new context of globalisation and apparently weakened policy salience of the nation state in economic policy determination.

Thus since the Whitlam era, schooling, as with most other public and social policy domains, is in practice a shared responsibility between the Commonwealth and States. And it is interesting to note in that respect that John Gorton as far back as 1966 as federal Minister for Education, prior to the Whitlam expansion of Commonwealth involvement observed that education was 'tending to become, in effect, a partnership between the Commonwealth and the States' (quoted in Smart, 1978, p. 80). That tendency is now the reality. This is the political and policy reality and is so despite protestations by many a State minister for education that schooling is a Constitutional responsibility of the States and despite the fact that the Commonwealth employs no teachers and does not run curriculum and assessment and accreditation authorities. This has meant that the Commonwealth has taken a strategic role. As Sharman (1991, p. 23) has suggested, today:

The operation of state and national governments involves such a degree of interpenetration that it is hard to find either an area of commonwealth activity that does not impinge on state policies, or state administration that does not entail some commonwealth involvement.

This reality of shared responsibility for schooling is recognised in the most recent *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (1996) which outlines the Commonwealth's 'schooling related roles' (p. 2) in the following manner:

Roles shared with state and non-government school authorities include identifying national priorities for schooling, promoting national consistency and coherence in the provision of schooling across Australia, and identifying strategies for achieving these aims. DEETYA provides significant supplementary financial input to State and non-government school authorities to support agreed priorities and strategies. A shared national priority in relation to disadvantaged students sees continuing cooperation on agreed goals and strategies between State and non-government school authorities and the Commonwealth in schools' equity policies and programs. This includes policy and programs relating to Indigenous people and immigrants, for whom the Commonwealth has particular responsibilities.

The Commonwealth also has specific responsibilities for the provision of financial assistance for students and for Australia's international relations in education. (MCEETYA, 1997, p. 2)

The talk here of 'national' as opposed to 'Commonwealth' responsibilities and priorities is indicative of the situation of shared responsibility and the 'interpenetration' of Commonwealth and State involvement as suggested by Sharman. It is also a signifier of the complex politics of federalism in schooling and developments since the Whitlam/Karmel systematisation of Commonwealth policies and programs. The very existence of a *National Report on Schooling in Australia* is another manifestation of developments in federal/State relations in schooling since that time, as is the existence now of a federal Minister for Schools.

Bearing in mind the argument here that federalism works politically as well as Constitutionally, schooling remains a residual Constitutional power of the States and Territories because schooling is not mentioned in Section 51 of the Constitution which outlines the powers of the Commonwealth. There are, however, three elements of the Constitution which allow the Commonwealth some involvement in schooling (Borgeest, 1994). The first of these is the result of a 1946 amendment to the Constitution which granted the Commonwealth the additional power to provide 'benefits to students' (section 51 xxiiiA), which was part of the Constitutional justification for the creation of the post-war welfare state and has been used as the basis of Commonwealth provision of scholarships and allowances to students across the three sectors of education. Tannock and Birch (1976), however, have argued that this might provide the Commonwealth with more latent power in respect of schooling than has usually been acknowledged. The second justification for Commonwealth involvement relates to the States grants power of Section 96, which allows the Commonwealth to make grants to the States for the purposes that the Commonwealth sees fit. This is the Constitutional basis of tied grants to the States which allows the Commonwealth to make policy and sometimes ideological inroads into domains which appear Constitutionally to be the prerogative of the States. It is section 96 which gives the Commonwealth a 'more supple source' of power in schooling and has formed the 'principal foundation for the power relationships within federal financial arrangement' (Borgeest, 1994, p.3).

It is this head of power, combined with vertical fiscal imbalance, which has meant the States have been vulnerable to the exigencies of Commonwealth funding and policy initiatives. As suggested above, the States have been easily seduced by the proffering of increased Commonwealth funds for specific developments in particular policy domains, or alternatively frightened by the threat of withdrawal of such funding, irrespective of Constitutional niceties. This is the funding/compliance trade-off central to Commonwealth/State relations in schooling. The huge influx of funds into both government and non-government schools following Karmel, while being absolutely necessary to the improvement of standards of schooling provision, as well as equality of educational opportunity, also established a degree of dependency of both non-government schools and State systems upon Commonwealth funding. Vertical fiscal imbalance has meant that State budgets are affected

substantially by cuts in Commonwealth grants. After 1987, for example, cuts in Commonwealth grants to the States made collaborative approaches to national curriculum frameworks more attractive to them, particularly given the situation that had seen bureaucratic restructuring reduce the size and capacity of their curriculum branches (Groenewegen, 1994; Lingard and Porter, 1997).

There is a third possible basis for Commonwealth involvement in schooling. Borgeest (1994) argues that the foreign affairs power (section 51 xxix) might also grant the Commonwealth a head of power with respect to schooling if Australia had international treaty obligations in this domain. This is the Constitutional justification which the Hawke government used for stopping the Franklin Dam in Tasmania after its election victory in 1993. Borgeest has suggested that potentially such usage is possible in education.

To reiterate, federalism works politically as well as Constitutionally with section 96 and the reality of vertical fiscal imbalance meaning that schooling, since the systematisation of Commonwealth activities, has become a *shared responsibility* between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. That the most recent *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (1996) documents National and Commonwealth developments in schooling, as well as individual State and Territory initiatives, is indicative of this reality of shared responsibility and the political character of federalism in schooling.

### **The Systematisation of Federal Involvement in Schooling Following the Karmel Settlement**

The general structure of the Whitlam systematisation of Commonwealth involvement in schooling which flowed from the implementation of the Karmel Report recommendations has been outlined above. In a sense the Karmel Report was a culmination of a range of political pressures and demands about the funding of schools and their purposes in respect of equality of educational opportunity, which had been mounting during the post-war period. More particularly, during the sixties and early seventies pressure groups and the States (sometimes at the AEC) argued the necessity for increased funding for schooling so as to meet the costs of providing good quality education to the increasing numbers staying on in secondary schooling and in response to the population boom following the war. What the Commonwealth had done in respect of universities, many suggested they needed to do in respect of schools. The Karmel Report - *Schools in Australia, Report of the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission*, which was appointed immediately after Whitlam won government, was clearly given a mandate to enhance Commonwealth funding for recurrent and capital purposes for both government and non-government schools, and introduce a number of specific programs aimed at precipitating innovation and diversity in schools and more equality of opportunity for all students. The terms of reference made this mandate for increased funding and systematisation readily apparent and all believed that the Karmel recommendations would be acted upon by the government. Terms of reference 3 (b) and 3 (c) noted that the grants recommended by the Interim Committee were to be 'in addition to existing Commonwealth commitments' and 'directed towards increased expenditure on schools and not in substitution for continuing efforts by the States and non-government school authorities' (Interim Committee, 1973, p.3). That framing is a clear indication of the progressive Keynesian approach of the times and is even more remarkable in retrospect. Today, in an era of post-Keynesianism, the emphasis is much more upon the achievement of specified outcomes from schooling at constant or reducing cost.

The Karmel Report, however, was about much more than simply broadening Commonwealth involvement in schooling and substantially enhancing funding, though in the context of its time (and in relation to subsequent developments) we ought not forget the magnitude of both of those

changes. Policy has been recognised as 'the authoritative allocation of values'; in this respect the Karmel Report had an entire chapter devoted to outlining its 'Values and Perspectives' (ch 2). Three basic values were dealt with, namely, 'devolution of responsibility', 'equality' and 'diversity' and the place of public and private schools and community involvement in respect of those values. The Report recognised that its recommendations were being made to a system or structure over which 'it has little direct power to modify' (p. 10). Further, it observed: 'The Committee is not responsible for the running of schools, and so it would be out of place for it to lay down detailed prescriptions about the functions of schools and the nature of curricula' (p.10). This is an observation which has been made very regularly in subsequent debates concerning federal/State relations in schooling. Nonetheless, the Report and Schools Commission policies which followed did attempt to affect schools, teachers and teaching more directly. Indeed, Doug White (1987, p. 22) has suggested that through its funding approaches the Schools Commission 'formulated a new mode of control, without an extensive exercise of bureaucratic power; it used funds ideologically, that is to favour certain directions, without a bureaucratic command system'.

In respect of devolution of responsibility and in recognition of the fact that it did not control schools which were directed by bureaucratic command systems at the States level, it noted:

The Committee favours less rather than more centralised control over the operation of schools. Responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling, in consultation with the parents of the pupils whom they teach and, at senior levels, with the students themselves. Its belief in this grass-roots approach to the control of the schools reflects a conviction that responsibility will be most effectively discharged where the people entrusted with making decisions are also the people responsible for carrying them out, with an obligation to justify them, and in a position to profit from their experience. (p.10).

This was a fulsome articulation of what Rizvi (1994) has called the 'social democratic' conception of devolution; a conception which many parents and teachers hold onto today even as the notion has been rearticulated through various managerialist and market rearticulations in the post-Keynesian context (Rizvi, 1994). In relation to this social democratic conception of devolution, the Report also noted that a 'national bureaucracy', 'further removed from schools than are State ones' (p.10) was not the structure required to instantiate the Report's values. Importantly, it also noted that such devolution could exacerbate inequalities between schools if there was not careful planning of resource allocation from 'the centre'. The important supplementary role of the Commonwealth in this respect was stressed - 'its national responsibility may become increasingly important in ensuring an adequate level of resources and their equitable spread' (p.11). This is a point which appears to have been neglected in later policy articulations of devolution, both at the Commonwealth and State levels.

The Report also supported more community and parental involvement in schooling to accompany its conceptualisation of devolution. In so doing, it also recognised the potential tensions between community and parental directions and teacher professional knowledge and judgement. Additionally, there was strong support for experimentation in respect of school/community relations (p. 14). Such a commitment to experimentation was also evident in the Report's encouragement of diversity rather than uniformity of schooling. The Report placed 'high value on the provision of resources in ways which will not simply perpetuate existing forms of schooling' (p. 11). Teachers and schools were to be encouraged to experiment. The support for diversity also linked to the Report's attitude to non-government schools; they were another element in diverse provision, while at the same time the Report pointed out that it valued equality over diversity.

The parlous state of catholic systemic schools was recognised by the Karmel Report. In some ways its recommendations and subsequent funding arrangements can probably be seen to have 'saved' that system and encouraged its bureaucratisation. The policy tensions inherent in funding of both government and non-government schools and the question of equality were readily acknowledged, with the Report noting: 'It accepts the right of parents to choose schooling above the levels to which the Committee's recommendations are designed to raise government schools which are at present below them; it does not accept their right to public assistance to facilitate this choice' (p.12). This issue of the appropriate balance between the values of equality and choice in the Commonwealth funding regime for all schools has been rearticulated in various guises since the Karmel settlement which appeared to solve it for a time at least. Certainly the Report received universal support for its reporting and recommendations.

In expressing its support for equality the Report defined this notion in terms of equality of outcomes between different social groups. This was a different definition of outcomes compared with the contemporary emphasis on product accountability and also one that ought not be forgotten. The Report also recognised the need to positively discriminate in funding terms for the schooling of the socially disadvantaged; the expression of this value was manifest in the establishment of the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP). The Report did, however, also acknowledge the tension between equality and quality of provision, the very tension at the heart of the second national Karmel Report, *Quality of Education in Australia* (1985).

Teachers were seen as central to good schooling, as well as to change and experimentation. Teacher professional development was supported through funding for PD and through the creation of Education Centres. Innovation and change were to be fostered through a Special Projects Fund (p.14) supportive of change and innovation at school, system and national levels. Johnston (1993) has suggested that the DSP in effect worked as a 'progressive virus' in the large state education bureaucracies. Teacher PD and Special Project support also worked in this way. Thus Karmel set in place some relationships with schools and teachers which in a fashion by-passed the State bureaucracies. This created some tensions, tensions which came to the surface again with the National Professional Development Program and Teacher Union Accord under the Keating Labor government in the early nineties. White has argued that the Report wanted 'to establish an Australia-wide schools system, on something like the model of the tertiary education system' (19987, p. 22). Writing in 1987, he noted, however, that this tendency has remained somewhat underdeveloped (p22). Further developments in that direction occurred during the Dawkins era of national policies in schooling, but the structure of federalism and the significance of school systems to the States has and always will make such a policy intention very difficult to achieve.

The implementation of the Karmel Report through the creation of the Schools Commission, a statutory authority, some distance from the Minister, the political process and the bureaucracy, had real implications for federalism in schooling. There was now in place a system of recurrent and capital funding for both government and non-government schools over and above existing State and Commonwealth provision. This delighted the educational policy community throughout Australia. In addition, there were specific programs linked to innovation and equality which affected schools and teachers more directly. The Karmel Report thus made manifest the Whitlam recognition, that given vertical fiscal imbalance, the Commonwealth had to be involved in schooling to ensure high standards of provision of schooling for all students and to work towards equality of educational opportunity. There was more potential for tensions in Commonwealth/State relations in respect of these specific programs because they went to the heart of schools and teaching and potentially by-passed the State bureaucracies. While it is correct to say that the States readily accepted the enhanced recurrent and capital funding, they were a little more suspicious of the specific purpose programs because of their accountability requirements and their potential impact upon schools and

teachers, which they saw as their domain. There has been an ongoing tension since Karmel around these very issues with the States at all times preferring untied grants and weaker accountability requirements from the Commonwealth, with the Commonwealth, rightly, expecting more focussed accountability. What occurred in terms of federal/State relations in schooling following Karmel was one instance of Whitlam's attempted reform of federalism more broadly (here see Ch 20 of Whitlam, 1985.)

The Whitlam government's policy regime, including in schooling, was the high point of progressive Keynesianism and a strong definition of national government and its aspirations was central to its self imagining. In a sense, the Whitlam government was also the high point of centralism in the history of Commonwealth/State relations generally, yet Whitlam himself has argued that his government was not so much centralist as desiring a new set of federal/regional relations which cut across State boundaries. There was something of this in the Karmel Report and the notion of State and or regional Committees of the Schools Commission. However, in schooling there already existed the large educational bureaucracies accompanied by the jealous protection by the States of schooling as their domain. Some of these concerns came to the fore in the Fraser government's 'new federalism' and its attempt to rejudge federal/State financial and functional relationships. However, despite incremental modifications to the Karmel approach to funding of non-government schools and a resurgence of the use of 'Commonwealth' as opposed to 'federal', the Fraser government basically kept the program and management structures created out of the Karmel recommendations. More substantial changes to these came with the period of national policies in schooling in the late eighties and early nineties under the Hawke Labor government.

#### **National Policies in Schooling: The Hawke/Keating Years**

In the first two Hawke Labor governments (1983-84; 1984-87) Susan Ryan was the Minister for Education and worked a Whitlam type agenda in schooling, but in vastly different economic and political circumstances, particularly of youth unemployment, and Hawke Labor's commitment to efficient government and moderated change. Further, while Whitlam had confronted federalism the Hawke government was much more pragmatic in seeking to work it politically.

Fraser's Transition Education program developed in response to intransigently high levels of youth unemployment was built upon incremental by Labor's *Participation and Equity Program* (PEP) as the centre piece of policy development early in the Ryan period. The administrative and structural arrangements put in place during the Whitlam era for schooling with the Schools Commission as a clientist, professionally oriented Statutory Authority at some distance from the minister and government, remained in place and had advice and program management functions in relation to recurrent and capital funding, as well as specific purpose programs. In September 1985 the administration of general recurrent and capital grants was removed from the Schools Commission to the Commonwealth Department of Education, leaving only specific purpose programs under the control of the Commission (McIntosh, 1994, p.1). Following the 1987 federal election John Dawkins became Labor's federal Minister for the restructured portfolio of Employment, Education and Training, which was part of a restructured public sector of a more managerialist kind. The Schools Commission was abolished and replaced by the Schools Council as a subsidiary member of the National Board for Employment, Education and Training (NBEET). The Schools Council had no program management functions with the management of Commonwealth specific purpose programs also now transferred to DEET.

In terms of federal/State relations in schooling perhaps the most significant move during Ryan's period was the development of the *National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools* (NPEG) (1987), which had its gestation in the Ryan era, but was formally endorsed by the

Australian Education Council under Dawkins. Connors and McMorrow (1988) have written of how the Minister wanted a Commonwealth program but was convinced by her advisers that a national policy would be better politics if it were to be achieved through consensus and negotiation between the States, Territories and Commonwealth, rather than imposed by the Commonwealth. During the period of its gestation the Schools Commission took national responsibility for its carriage, but given the character of federalism in schooling the endorsement of the NPEG required the imprimatur of the AEC. There were both strengths and weaknesses in the approach taken to the development of the NPEG. For instance, Connors and McMorrow (1988) note how the original intention of the policy had a national plan of action, but in the final version of the policy such a plan of action was replaced by a set of illustrative examples following negotiations with the States, another example of how the federal structure mediates policy development in respect of schooling. It is also significant that the NPEG was endorsed by the Commonwealth, States and Territories, as well as by Catholic and non-government schooling systems, an indication of the width of the purview of Commonwealth involvement in schooling.

The 'national' approach taken with the NPEG was an important precursor to a broader strategy of national approaches in schooling taken by John Dawkins during his period as Minister and signify another qualitative, rather than incremental, change in federal/States relations in schooling which built upon earlier Whitlam/Karmel changes. The system of recurrent and capital funding for both non-government and government schools along with specific purpose programs was now to be accompanied by a broad range of *national* policies for schools. Martin (1996, p.16) has suggested that the Dawkins period, which was paralleled by a dominance of Labor governments at State level, was the time when Australia went furthest down the road towards a national system of schooling. I would add the rider that such a development was always going to be framed by the federal political structure. Australia, as long as it has a federal political structure, can never develop a national curriculum of the type established in England and Wales which has a unitary political structure, albeit one perhaps evolving towards some sort of federation.

Dawkins' approach to federalism and schooling was articulated in a short but influential Ministerial policy statement entitled *Strengthening Australia's Schools* (SAS) (1988). The changes to the Department and policy advice and management structures and the significance of a Ministerial paper were indicative of the emerging 'ministerialisation' of educational policy production (Knight and Lingard, 1997) and a move away from the clientist approach of the Schools Commission. Along with the restructured Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) they were also signifiers of the new managerialism within a restructured state and of a new micro-economic human capital framing of educational policy. Thus SAS asserted:

The Government is now considering the role of schools more broadly, in the context of a society undergoing significant social and economic adjustment. (Foreword)

The Australian economy is part way through a process of substantial structural change. The lesson we have learnt is the need for a more balanced industrial structure and increased flexibility and responsiveness in the economy. Adjustment of our economy and society is inevitable and necessary... As part of this adjustment, parents and community generally... have ...come to expect schools to provide young Australians with all the knowledge and skills, and especially contemporary skills, they will need in life... The schools play a critical role in the nature of our society and economy... Schools are the starting point of an integrated education and training structure in the economy. (pp.1-2)

While SAS also expressed some concern with the education of the most disadvantaged, the prior concern was the significance of schooling to an integrated education and training agenda linked to



microeconomic reform. This was the hybrid approach of later Hawke/Keating Labor governments which granted meta-policy status to economic restructuring and education's contribution to it, while also attempting to hold onto an equity agenda (Lingard, Knight and Porter, 1993). While the Whitlam agenda and the Karmel detailing of the specifics of it were concerned with the necessary increases in funding for all Australian schools so as to improve standards of provision over all and so as to ensure equality of educational opportunity, educational policy after Whitlam was more concerned with outputs and outcomes, more concerned with efficiency - the achievement of more for less - and effectiveness, measured achievement of articulated goals. The second Karmel Report at the national level, *Quality of Education in Australia* (1985) was one important signifier of this move from inputs to outputs in the framing of public policy in Australia. On this very point, SAS stated:

The adjustment task before our schools does not require more money as much as it does more cooperation between those who work in schools and those who have responsibility for making policy for them at all levels of the nation. (p.2)

In the Foreword, Dawkins observed that there would be 'less focus on the resources which are put into schools and more on gaining improved educational outcomes from schooling in selected areas of high priority'. Thus all sectors of education were to be harnessed to the restructuring of the economy and framed by a human capital rationale. Given that the economy was clearly the responsibility of the federal government it thus had to have a say in schooling policy, while the stress on outcomes and efficiency required a nationally collaborative approach. Thus SAS states: 'The Commonwealth recognises that, for both constitutional and financial reasons, it is not the primary policy maker in the area of schools' (p.3). However, it then adds: 'But the Commonwealth will not ignore the very real responsibility it has to provide national leadership' (p.3). In a 1990 press statement Dawkins stressed that the Commonwealth was no longer simply prepared to be a 'banker' for schools but had as well to provide a 'national leadership' role which he distinguished from 'central control' ('Dawkins pushes', 1990); such a statement is indicative of the complexity of federalism in schooling and the range of interests at play. SAS was the first and fullest assertion of the policy need for a national effort in schooling. This was an approach well beyond the system of Commonwealth programs instigated under Whitlam. Thus SAS states, 'Accordingly, we have decided to invite the cooperation of the States to develop and implement a national effort to strengthen the capacity of our schools to meet the challenges they face' (p.3). In line with that argument SAS recommended the need for, amongst other things, national goals for schooling, national curriculum frameworks, a common approach to assessment, and the possibility of a national approach to teacher education.

John Dawkins as the federal Minister went some considerable way towards establishing such national policies. The Australian Education Council (AEC) had been created in 1936 as the intergovernmental council in education consisting of State, Territory and after 1972 the federal minister for education. Andy Spaul (1987) in his history of the AEC has argued that, from 1972 with the presence of the federal minister at the council and the expanded Commonwealth role following the Whitlam/Karmel reforms, the AEC became a forum at which the States responded to the Commonwealth's agenda. During the Dawkins period the AEC changed in character to become a quasi policy making body; this was the site at which and through which Minister Dawkins pursued his national agenda in schooling. This enhanced policy significance of the AEC in schooling was a further manifestation of the ministerialisation of policy making in a new globalising economic and political context. The AEC was the site at which the Commonwealth now pursued its policy and strategic role in respect of schools.

In July 1988 the 58th AEC meeting agreed to a 'mapping exercise' to document curriculum provision in the various States and Territories as the forerunner of the move to National Curriculum Statements and Profiles. The strategic placement of 'collaborative' between 'national' and 'curriculum' in all AEC minutes and documents is significant and an indicator of the workings of federalism in schooling. In April 1989 the AEC endorsed the 'Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia', established the Curriculum Corporation of Australia and agreed to produce an annual National Report on Schooling. A range of other National policies were also created, including the National Policy for the Education of Girls (NPEG) (1987) referred to earlier, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (1989) (see McConaghy, 1997), the National Asian Languages and Cultures Strategy (1993) which had its origins in the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) (Rizvi, 1997; Knight and Lingard, 1997) process which Prime Minister Hawke had established to review federalism in the attempt to create a more collaborative model towards a more efficient national economic infrastructure (Painter, 1998). The National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning, the National Schools Network and the setting up of the Australian Teaching Council were elements of the move towards a national teaching profession; the latter was abolished when the Coalition came to government in 1996. The AEC also approved the National Strategy for Equity in Schools. When listed in this way one can see the extent of the move towards national approaches and this is without even considering the interaction between the national training reform agenda and developments in schooling. The Ministerial Council of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET) was created in 1990 and met jointly with the AEC from October 1991. The AEC mediated the Commonwealth agenda so that it became a national agenda and national became a notion over which the Commonwealth and States fought and sought to protect and pursue their interests.

The AEC (and MOVEET) and its agendas were also affected by the broader attempt to reconstitute federalism by Hawke in the early 1990s. In this context Special Premiers' Conferences (SPCs) were held in October 1990 and July 1991, while another planned for November 1991 was cancelled partly because of the leadership challenge from then Treasurer Keating to the leadership of Hawke of the Labor government. In summary, the SPCs:

...sought to rationalise the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States, to rationalise functional responsibilities between the various levels of government in order to minimise duplication and to improve the economic efficiency of the country through the implementation of wide-ranging micro-economic reforms. (Goss, 1991, p.2673)

The SPC were driven by Hawke in conjunction with the State premiers who sought to rationalise federalism by some rejigging of funding (including revenue raising powers) and functions. In a sense the motivation, at one level, was to move some way towards rectifying vertical fiscal imbalance. Keating's stance on this issue was one element in his leadership challenge to Hawke. For Keating and many in the Labor caucus, this would have meant an unacceptable weakening of the federal government's capacity to influence a national policy agenda (Kelly, 1992, p.641). Keating's more centralist tendencies, more like the Whitlam position, were evident in his National Press Club speech of October 1991 in the lead up to his successful challenge to Hawke later in the year:

Next month's Special Premiers' Conference is to be devoted to remedying, among other things, what is now often referred to as 'vertical fiscal imbalance'. I have always thought that clumsy term misleading and designed to be misleading...The term simply means that the national government raises a great deal of money that is spent by the States. To my mind, that is no 'imbalance' at all. (Keating, 1991, p.1)

The Council of Australian Governments was established at a Heads of Government meeting in May 1992 to continue the attempt to rejig federalism so as to achieve a more efficient national economy and single national market (James, 1992, p.64), but within a different frame, given Keating's attitude to vertical fiscal imbalance. As part of COAG's efficiency drive all intergovernmental councils came unto review with the result that the AEC was amalgamated with MOVEET and the Youth Council to form the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) from the beginning of 1994. The influence of COAG was perhaps an indication of what has (somewhat infelicitously) been referred to as 'supra-ministerialisation' (Knight and Lingard, 1997) - the increased influence of heads of government at both Commonwealth and States levels over government policy agendas. The new managerialist state was also about reducing duplication and focusing more tightly on a narrower policy agenda with the stress upon the achievement of outcomes (Considine, 1988, p.9). There was an element of this in the SPC and COAG agendas, as well as in the national approach prosecuted at the AEC by Dawkins and the Commonwealth.

The dominance of Labor governments at the State level was important to the Dawkins push for national approaches in schooling. The SPC and COAG agendas and processes were indicative of federalism as a focus of politics in a new political context. Federalism in schooling was also subject to such politics and this was very evident at the 69th meeting of the AEC, combined with MOVEET on the 21st July 1993 in Perth, where Coalition governments were now in a majority. The outcome was a reassertion of so-called 'States' rights' in schooling with a formal motion passed to the effect that the continuation of the push towards National Curriculum Statements and Profiles was now to be determined by considerations at State level by State systems. In effect the States had struck back, as it were, and moved decisively to seize the initiative in the AEC on national issues, while at the same time noting that a collaborative approach between the States and Territories was desirable. Where prior to this political moment the Commonwealth had largely set the pace in respect of a national agenda, the balance of power was now taken back by the States. In a debate at the meeting over a motion expressing this position (and it should be noted that formal motions at the AEC have been rather rare, the Council has 'traditionally' worked on a consensus basis), the then Commonwealth Minister (Kim Beazley Jr.) berated the non-Labor Ministers for their 'rail gauge' mentality. Amongst other things, he noted the irony of the situation in which they were acting against the expressed wishes of their 'natural' constituencies, namely, the Business Council of Australia and the Confederation of Australian Industry and Chambers of Commerce, who had been supportive of national frames for schooling.

The degree of resentment of the Commonwealth's dominance of the national agenda in schooling was manifest at the subsequent AEC meeting in Hobart on December 3, 1993. A motion was moved by the Western Australian Education Minister that the Commonwealth vacate the schooling arena altogether. Eventually this motion was not put. Since that time the Dawkins national agenda has been repatriated to the States with them pursuing it on their own terms and in a much more minimalist manner. This political situation at the AEC saw Labor attempt to continue to pursue its national agenda through an Accord signed with the government and non-government teachers' unions prior to the 1993 election, which also fuelled resentment amongst the States, and through a well funded National Professional Development Program (NPDP) which bypassed State systems and worked directly with teacher professional associations. In a sense this was a rearticulation of the Whitlam recognition that changing educational practice required teacher commitment to it and extensive teacher professional development. This new Labor strategy was somewhat paradoxical, given that teachers at both the national and State levels had become much more the objects rather than the subjects of educational policy development.

Labor's approach to a national agenda in schooling during the Dawkins period and following was a new stage in federal/State relations in schooling. It was also redolent of a new post-Keynesian policy settlement, linked to a restructured state apparatus framed by the new managerialism and a meta-policy of economic restructuring, which included education's (human capital) contribution to it. The idea of the federal government being more than a banker for schools, both government and non-government took hold, as did the notion that the federal government had some sort of leadership role in respect of schooling, particularly given the linkages between a human capital construction of schooling and an economically oriented definition of the national interest. Schooling was to contribute to the production of economic citizens, a narrower construction than that which had underpinned the earlier Whitlam/Karmel reforms (Marginson, 1997). Commonwealth funding and programs were now accompanied by national frameworks. The election of a Coalition government in 1996 saw federal/State relations in schooling take an even narrower and more focussed turn, but a turn which built nonetheless in an incremental fashion upon the Dawkins and post-Dawkins developments.

### **Howard and Federalism in Schooling: the 1996 Election Platform and National Commission of Audit**

In the policies they took to the 1996 election, the Coalition recognised that schooling was a Constitutional responsibility of the States, but also acknowledged the need for some Commonwealth leadership role 'in the guiding of national directions and priorities'. In this way it built incrementally upon the national approach prosecuted quite aggressively during the incumbency of Dawkins as education minister (1987-1991). It also nodded in the direction of the Coalition's stronger commitment to a federalist rather than centralist approach to federal/state relations, a situation mediated for Labor by the development of 'national' policies in addition to Commonwealth programs. We need to remember here as well, and as noted above, that it was the changed political hue of State governments which effectively slowed down Labor's push for national policies in schooling (Bartlett, Knight, Lingard and Porter, 1994).

In its 1996 election platform the Coalition also articulated a commitment to continuing Labor's national professional development funding for teachers and working 'to enhance the status of the profession'. The Coalition also supported increasing funding for schooling, particularly for primary schooling in the light of Australia's low standing in the OECD ranking of school expenditure amongst its members. The Coalition was also committed to abolishing Labor's New Schools Policy which attempted to keep a check on the *ad hoc* growth of non-government schools because of their demands upon the public purse in a context of fiscal rectitude. This was a rearticulation of the Coalition's greater commitment to parental choice in schooling, which had earlier been manifest in the incremental changes to the needs-based model of funding of non-government schools introduced by the Fraser government. There was also in the platform strong commitment to parental choice in *both* schooling sectors, government and non-government, along with support for reducing administrative demands upon the States that flowed from the Commonwealth accountability requirements for their programs. Commonwealth/State politics had been played out over that very issue during the Dawkins drive for national approaches.

Immediately on winning government the Coalition established a National Commission of Audit to consider 'aspects of the management and financial activities of the Commonwealth government' (Officer et al, 1996), which *inter alia* touched on the issue of Commonwealth-State financial relationships, a matter which had been of high political focus during the era of Hawke's 'new federalism' and SPC and COAG processes. The Audit Commission reported in June 1996 and made recommendations in respect of the Commonwealth's role in policy and financial terms in the three education sectors. It recommended a return to an earlier coordinate model of responsibilities,

eschewing the interpenetration of Commonwealth and State responsibilities inherent in the collaborative approaches pursued by the previous Labor governments, and arguing for the States being responsible for both government and non-government schooling and the Commonwealth having responsibility for TAFE and universities. In effect, the Commonwealth had taken policy 'control' of higher education (despite the legislative reality) when the Whitlam government had taken over funding from the States in the seventies. A more complex form of federalism worked in TAFE following the creation of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in 1993/94 following the failure of the Commonwealth to take over TAFE from the States during the Hawke/Keating period. The National Commission of Audit thus expressed a desire for a return to a more coordinate model of federalism across the three sectors of education.

Matthews (1977) has used the descriptor 'coordinate federalism' to refer to that form which operated during the first three decades of this century when there was a clearer distinction between the policy responsibilities of the Commonwealth and those of the States than has hitherto been the case, particularly after the Commonwealth took over income-tax raising powers from the States in 1942, resulting in vertical fiscal imbalance. The recommendations in this respect of the Commission would have required a trade-off, with the Commonwealth vacating schools, and the States and Territories vacating TAFE. In that scenario, schooling would no longer have been the shared responsibility of the Commonwealth and States, but rather the sole responsibility of the States and Territories. Furthermore, and in line with its stronger articulation of smaller government rhetoric than its Labor predecessors, the Commission argued that where programs were transferred to the States, accompanied by their movement from specific purpose payments to untied financial assistance, they should be funded at 90 per cent of current levels because of efficiency gains resulting from the eradication of duplication and overlap and reduction of administrative costs.

Interestingly, and as noted previously, with the down-sized and restructured bureaucracies of the State departments of Education in the late 1980s, federal Labor had argued that national collaboration in schooling towards national approaches was a more efficient usage of schooling expenditure. Thus, while the Commission of Audit argued coordinate federalism in education would mean more efficient usage of resources, Labor had argued that national collaboration ensured more efficient usage. The Commission of Audit had also noted that in the process of such transfers 'the Commonwealth should seek the States' agreement to provide appropriate data for the collection and publication of national aggregate statistics on program output and outcome' (p.48). This was a specific manifestation of the new managerialist stress upon outcomes (effectiveness) as opposed to the stress upon increased inputs during the Whitlam implementation of the Karmel Report. There appeared to be the situation here of some form of national testing as the *quid pro quo* for a return to a more coordinate model of federalism in education, which would be very different from the earlier historical model in retaining a particular kind of Commonwealth involvement in schooling.

The Coalition government did not move in relation to these Audit Commission recommendations and one speculates as to why this was the case. Suffice to say here that maybe the extent of higher education changes following the discovery of the so-called budget black-hole of \$10 billion was an expansive enough agenda. The existence of a Commonwealth Minister for Schools, in the first instance Dr Kemp and in the second Senator Ellison, is indicative of the changed role of the Commonwealth in schooling since the Whitlam and Hawke/Keating changes. However, the Commonwealth's approach under the Coalition was much more minimalist and managerialist, emphasising policy outputs and a 'steering at a distance' *modus operandi*, and driven much more by a market ideology, than the hybrid efficiency/equity, human capital/ social justice collaborative national approach of Labor. That the Commonwealth has not 'conceded' schooling to the States as sole States' responsibility is also probably indicative of the view that education policy is today a central plank of appropriate national responses to globalisation. Further, once the Commonwealth

has enhanced its policy presence in a particular policy field it is always reluctant, despite the ideology of the Party in power in respect of the federalist/centralist continuum, to vacate that domain. The Coalition's schooling approach built incrementally, yet in a more minimalist fashion, upon the terrain of federalism in schooling as established by its Labor predecessors. Commonwealth programs remained, national approaches remained, but rearticulated by Party ideology.

### **The Kemp Agenda**

A number of features of the developments under the previous Labor government remain in place. Perhaps the most notable here is the ministerialisation of policy making. On becoming the Minister for Schools, Dr Kemp promised the creation of a new advice body consisting of teachers to replace the Schools Council which was abolished. However, despite a process of consultation and advice seeking, such a body has not yet been created. Further, the Commonwealth cut funding for the Australian Teaching Council which was then wound up and which had been closely associated with the teacher unions. Dr Kemp has had a vastly different relationship with the trade union movement from that of his Labor predecessors and this has perhaps been an element in his achievement of national testing in literacy. Under the Coalition, the Commonwealth portfolio for Education followed the pattern of a junior and senior Minister as had been first established post Dawkins. This is indicative of the size of the portfolio responsibilities, but also of the significance of the different federalisms which operate in the three education sectors, given the different funding arrangements which operate across them. Despite the Coalition's more federalist stance as compared with the more centralist stance taken by Labor, it is significant that there is still a Commonwealth Minister for Schools and that the lexicon of 'national' approaches is still prevalent. And, of course, the broad structure of Commonwealth Programs established under Whitlam remains in place, albeit modified by the Coalition's stance and political intentions..

The Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia remain and have been modified to include the statement 'That every child leaving primary school should be able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level', a clause added at the July 1996 MCEETYA meeting and subsequently at the March 1997 MCEETYA meeting this goal was amended to include numeracy (MCEETYA, 1997, p. ix). These National Goals have also been under further review with a MCEETYA Discussion Paper released in May 1998. The significance of this review process relates to the desired incorporation of Targets for each of the goals. This is the emphasis within new managerialism on outputs and outcomes as opposed to inputs, a real signifier of the changes since the Whitlam/Karmel era. It is also an element of the 'steering at a distance' approach of such managerialism (Kickert, 1991). MCEETYA established a Taskforce chaired by Geoff Spring the CEO of Education Victoria to rethink the National Goals agreed to at the AEC in 1989. The new draft goals note that:

The National Goals for Schooling provide a basis for State and Territory school education systems, non-government school authorities and the Commonwealth to work together to:

- \* promote productive learning partnerships among students, parents, educators, business, industry and the wider community;
- \* provide safe, supportive learning and working environments;
- \* strengthen the status and quality of the teaching profession; and
- \* identify specific national targets, plans and strategies. (Australian's Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century, p.6)

There is a clear recognition here of schooling as a shared responsibility of the Commonwealth and States and Territories and the need for 'national targets, plans and strategies'. This is the way the Kemp agenda in schooling has built upon that of the previous government's move towards national



policies. The emphasis upon targets is central to this development. The Discussion Paper on the draft goals notes that MCEETYA at its December 1997 meeting directed the Taskforce to 'undertake the development of additional statements of specific objectives and targets relevant to each goal, as appropriate, for Ministers' further consideration' (p.5). There is quite a useful discussion in the Discussion Paper of targets and how they can be measured, recognising the inputs, outputs, outcomes distinction (p.6) and a listing of 'agreed national targets' in respect of each goal.

In turn this targeted national approach is linked to an emerging policy settlement in respect of how nations ought to respond to globalisation in the era after economic nationalism. What we have in response to globalisation with Labor (1993-1996) and Coalition governments (1996-present) is a tale of two policy settlements which have been worked on a terrain vastly different from that of the Whitlam/Karmel progressive Keynesian one. Labor in its approach across the three sectors of education pursued a micro-economically focused human capital approach conjoined with some emphases upon equity. This was a hybrid policy response. Thus in addition to a commitment to economic rationalism and the new managerialism, Labor also implemented a range of policies in relation to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity, what McKenzie Wark (1997) has called 'social rationalisation'. Labor's policy frame was about conjoining economic and social rationalisation. Education had an important role to play here as indicated in the admixture of human capital and social justice concerns in both Commonwealth and national approaches to schooling. Labor sought to internationalise the economy in conjunction with the trade union movement with some labour market deregulation. In contrast, the Coalition went to the 1996 election arguing that it would govern 'for all of us' and subsequently, under the rubric of anti political correctness, weakened the commitment to social rationalisation and strengthened its commitment to both economic rationalism and new managerialism. Labour market deregulation was taken another step. The notion of group disadvantage was considerably weakened, including in Commonwealth and national developments in schooling policy. (There are, however, important targets for the literacy and numeracy proficiency levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples expressed in the Agreed National targets in the Discussion Paper on national goals.) Commenting on this emergent situation, Allan Luke (1997) has spoken of the 'return of the individual deficit subject in new times'. There was now an even stronger emphasis upon efficiency, balancing the budget, more user pays approaches, and a much greater stress on targeting of policies and upon policy outcomes. Nonetheless, there was a continuing recognition that education, including schooling, were central elements in an effective response to globalisation. The strategy was a much more targeted one than that pursued by Labor during its more expansive national approach phase.

Just as Party ideology mediated the response of the Fraser government to federalism in schooling, but incrementally built upon the Whitlam/Karmel settlement, so it has been with the Coalition after 1996 which built upon the previous Labor approach with both Commonwealth and national approaches but these were mediated to a considerable degree by Party ideology. Further, just as John Dawkins was centrally important politically in the pursuit of the national agenda, so has been Dr David Kemp in the Coalition approach as both junior and senior minister in the portfolio. The Commonwealth strategy has been much more tightly targeted and focused upon outcomes. The most obvious example of this has been in relation to literacy (and to a lesser extent) numeracy policy driven by the Commonwealth. It is perhaps somewhat paradoxical that the Commonwealth's focus upon literacy, numeracy and targets very well might have a greater direct impact upon schools, teachers, teaching and classrooms than previous more centralist approaches pursued by Labor. Dr Kemp has identified literacy as *the* educational policy issue. Throughout 1996, 1997 and 1998 and even during the recent election campaign, the construction of school literacy as being in crisis has also destabilised public support for government schooling (Comber, Green, Lingard and Luke, 1998). This is not to deny the great significance of literacy, but rather to note that there are important questions here of how literacy is to be defined, particularly given the changes flowing

from the new technologies, the globalisation of culture and emergent hybrid identities. The States have agreed to national literacy (numeracy) testing and benchmarking at years 3, 5 and 7. This agreement was achieved at MCEETYA, an indication of the continuing significance of the intergovernmental council in national policy approaches. The definition of such benchmarks will also relate to questions of difference and multiculturalism within contemporary Australia. Similar testing in numeracy and outcomes measures in other domains will come later (MCEETYA National Goals Taskforce, 1998). Most State systems had been moving some way towards such testing as part of the emphasis of the new managerialism in the context of tight resources and a product accountability focus. National literacy testing is steering schooling at some considerable distance. Specific purpose Commonwealth equity programs such as the Disadvantaged Schools Program, which had its foundations in the equality of opportunity and affirmative action approaches of the Whitlam/Karmel schooling settlement, has been reconstituted as literacy program for disadvantaged students. With that change the unit of 'remediation' has moved from a stress on modifying whole school structures and processes to one of 'fixing up' individual student deficits (Lingard, 1998), a specific manifestation of Luke's (1997) argument concerning the return of the individual deficit subject in new times. This is not to necessarily oppose an emphasis upon outcomes in schooling policy, but rather to note the potential impact upon schooling of a more targeted, yet more minimalist national approach, pursued by the Coalition in schooling since 1996. It is also to recognise that such a testing emphasis is not likely to encourage the kind of productive pedagogies necessary to improving academic and social outcomes for all students (cf Neumann and Associates, 1996).

Given the continuing ministerialisation of schooling policy MCEETYA has remained an important site of national developments. However, its broad structure and membership probably mean that it has not taken as focused a role as its predecessor, the AEC. Nonetheless, activity and discussion at MCEETYA have mediated to some extent the Commonwealth agenda of Dr Kemp. MCEETYA has been involved in a range of other national policies, including a National Strategy to Combat Paedophilia in Schools, and an interest in the implementation of vocational education and training in schools.

The changed approach to funding of non-government schools is also another indicator of Party ideology mediating policy response. The Federal Coalition has been much more strongly committed to market ideology and parental choice than its Labor predecessor. As noted previously, the Whitlam settlement in respect of non-government schools effectively 'solved' the 'state-aid' debate by moving to a needs-based approach and by quarantining the funding of the two sectors. The Fraser modifications provided some challenges to that settlement, while Hawke also moved to quarantine funding for the two sectors after some initial moves by Susan Ryan to reduce funding to the wealthiest non-government schools. The current Coalition has modified the funding approach in two significant ways. First, as promised they abolished Labor's New Schools Policy and the restrictions on level of funding available to new non-government schools. Secondly, through the introduction of the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA) funding for government and non-government schools was again put in competition. This action was taken because of the priority the Coalition gives to competition as policy tool and to the valuing of parental choice of schooling. The state-aid debate has been potentially reopened by the response of the Coalition to funding the two sectors. It is an approach which also does not have the support of most State governments and parent bodies. Indeed the New South Wales Labor government had its concern recorded in the minutes of MCEETYA.

The Coalition's approach to federal/State relations in schooling has been driven by market ideology, support for competition and choice between schools and school sectors, and at the same time strengthened its managerialist approach. The new managerialism has witnessed the usage of private



sector practices to restructure bureaucracies to focus on a narrower range of goals and better achievement of that narrower range of goals. In stark contrast with the older style bureaucracies with their fetishized procedural correctness and sclerotic 'red-tapeism' (Yeatman, 1990), the new managerialism of the postmodern state is thus about achieving these goals at lower structural cost with the emphasis upon the achievement of the goals rather than the approach taken to their achievement. While there were elements of this in Labor's national approach in the late eighties and early nineties, developments in literacy and numeracy testing even better exemplify this hollowing out of state structures. Recently DEETYA has commissioned four papers on 'Autonomy and Quality in School Education' (Caldwell, 1998ab; Angus and Olney, 1998; Gannicott, 1998) and while they carry the usual caveat of not necessarily expressing the views of DEETYA and/or those of the government, it is interesting that a federal department is interested in such issues, given the claim of the States that schooling remains their Constitutional responsibility and given the move towards school based management in most State schooling systems.

### Analysis and Conclusion

The narrative outlined throughout of changes in Commonwealth /State relations in schooling since the Karmel Report has been framed at the broadest level by the move from Keynesian to post-Keynesian politics and emergent globalisation and all of the implications of such changes for conceptions of the nation, the potential for government policies to solve problems and achieve equality, and conceptions of education and citizenship. The Karmel Report systematised Commonwealth involvement in schools within a Keynesian framework, yet nonetheless established a program frame which has remained important to this day. Significantly in the light of subsequent developments, Karmel ensured a massive influx of funding into schooling. This was not to be the case for the whole of the following period; the stress moved from inputs to outcomes achieved at constant or reducing funding levels.

The next qualitative change in federal/State relations in schooling came during the Dawkins incumbency with the abolition of the Schools Commission, the repatriation of program management to the federal bureaucracy and the development of a range of national policies for schooling achieved at the AEC. These national policies were deemed necessary because of the hypothesised significance of an integrated education and training system to the demands and exigencies of globalisation and the decline of economic nationalism; this was a rearticulated micro-economically focused human capital theory. Equity and social justice concerns nevertheless remained on the agenda. Subsequent developments under Coalition governments have built upon this mix of Commonwealth and national approaches, but in a more marketised and managerialist way, emphasising targets and outcomes. MCEETYA has probably mediated some of this Commonwealth agenda and will continue to do so in a strengthened fashion given the changing political complexion of the State governments. It remains to be seen how the GST will affect Commonwealth/State financial relations and how this will be played out in federalism in schooling.

Federal/State relations in schooling have been framed by developments in federalism more broadly as this has been mediated by Party ideology. That federalism has been a focus of politics is best evidenced by so many articulations of 'new federalism' across the period under discussion in this paper. The continuing reality of vertical fiscal imbalance, however, means the Commonwealth retains the power to influence schooling which the States see as their Constitutional responsibility. To move to a more explicitly normative mode, the issues raised by the Karmel Report remain important to this day. Equality of educational opportunity is dependent upon the influx of targeted Commonwealth monies; central policy and funding frames remain important in ensuring a devolved system of schooling does not exacerbate inequalities. The relationship between funding of government and non-government schools remains a vexed question, particularly when that

distinction has become somewhat blurred through devolution, school based management and market approaches (Angus, 1997). The recognition of teachers, their understandings and continuing professional development as central to good schooling and innovation, retains its veracity, but the role of the Commonwealth and States in respect of this remains contentious.

The notion of a national system of schooling consisting of diverse schools with considerable teacher and community autonomy, which may have been inherent in the Karmel vision, has not been achieved. The more contemporary, and at this stage tentative, but perhaps emergent conception, of a national schooling system driven by national targets and testing will also not be achieved. This is so because the States continue to jealously protect their right to run their educational systems and schools and teachers remain important to policy implementation. In the shift from one conception to the other we have seen a move from a modernist discourse of certainty and hope to a postmodernist one of uncertainty and performativity, a move from fulsome state involvement and responsibility to a more hollowed out and narrower responsibility. In my view what is required is a rearticulation of the Karmel vision for these postmodern times, one which gives real thought to what equality, education and participation might mean in these times and suggest ways to give effect to that vision through reconceptualised federal/State relations and a reimagined community of the nation as an effective response to globalisation.

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# MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS: DEVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Brian J. Caldwell<sup>1</sup>

It is a privilege to be invited to address a conference that honours Professor Peter Karmel, whose contribution to education in this country spans nearly half a century and extends to virtually every level and sector of the enterprise. This is surely without precedent in our nation. It is an especially personal privilege because the landmark whose anniversary we are celebrating — The Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission — The Karmel Report — has been an important touch-stone in my own work on self-managing schools.

In this paper I briefly review what the Karmel Report had to say on devolution of responsibility and community involvement, set these statements in an historical perspective, and provide a broad overview of responses around the nation over the last twenty-five years. I have agreed to set out the basis of policy changes with which I have been involved and discuss the 'benefits and risks' of the changes as I see them. The major part of the paper is devoted to this account. I conclude that the means are at hand to bring the vision to realisation but there are major unresolved issues, including the linking of structural reform to learning, building social capital and civil society in support of schools, and broadly tapping the resources of the nation to aid the effort. Failure to address these issues and create a new settlement on the notion of 'education for the public good' may result in the marginalisation of public schools.

## Values and Perspectives

The clearest statements about devolution in the Karmel Report are contained in Chapter 2 on 'Values and Perspectives', where the Committee agreed that 'there is an obligation on it to set forth the principal values from which its recommendations have been derived' (p. 10). The key parts are set out below along with related statements on community involvement.

### *Devolution of Responsibility*

2.4 The Committee favours less rather than more centralised control over the operation of schools. Responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling, in consultation with the parents of the pupils whom they teach and, at senior levels, with the students themselves. Its belief in this grass-roots approach to the control of schools reflects a conviction that responsibility will be most effectively discharged where the people entrusted with making the decisions are also the people responsible for carrying them out, with an obligation to justify them, and in a position to profit from their experience.

2.5 Many consequences follow from this basic position. In the first place, a national bureaucracy, being further removed from the schools than are State ones, should not presume to interfere with the details of their operations. Secondly, the need for overall planning of the scale and distribution of resources becomes more necessary than ever if the devolution of authority is not to result in gross

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inequalities of provision between regions, whether they be States or smaller areas.

[Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, pp. 10 - 11]

These excerpts show unmistakably that the committee was concerned with 'control over the operation of schools', not limiting its view of devolution to concepts such as participation or consultation, and that a role for the centre, at a state rather than national level, was important in determining an equitable approach to the allocation of resources.

### *Community Involvement*

2.15 After almost one hundred years of public education a reappraisal of relationship of the school to the wider society is taking place in Australia, as it is in most industrialised nations. The isolation of schools is being questioned . . .

2.18 Australian society is much larger, more diversified, and better educated than when government-controlled education systems took shape in the late nineteenth century. This suggests the need to broaden the basis of educational policy-making beyond those presently involved and to inform public debate about the operation of schools and school systems. The size of the units which try to achieve educational goals may now be inappropriate for efficient and effective operation.

2.19 Antipathy towards and apathy about community participation in the governance of schooling is widespread throughout Australia. . .

2.20 The Committee is neither able nor willing to be prescriptive about the forms which school-community relations should take, but values experimentation. Educationally, and from the point of view of efficient use of resources, it would make good sense to have the school as the nucleus of a community centre. Joint planning, and even conduct, of schools by educational, health, welfare, cultural and sporting agencies could provide valuable facilities for the school, allow the community access to its resources, and thus generally increase its fruitfulness. . .

[Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, pp. 13 - 14]

Whereas the Committee was clear that devolution was concerned with 'control over the operation of schools', it was less certain about community involvement. There is reference in these excerpts to broadening 'the basis of educational policy-making beyond those presently involved' and antipathy was noted in respect to 'community participation in the governance of schooling'. The levels at which involvement was to occur was not specified but participation in governance at the school level was implied. The Committee was unwilling to be prescriptive. [It is noteworthy that 2.20 anticipates the current interest in full-service schools.]

### **Context**

The excerpts cited above reveal that the Committee was concerned at the apathy toward community involvement and the general isolation of schools. It is helpful to place the deliberations of the Committee in context — contemporary and historic — in respect to decentralisation and a role for the community in the operation of schools.

### *Contemporary*

The Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission was established in the early months of the Whitlam Labor Government at a time when traditional approaches to the exercise of authority were under challenge. This was the end of a five year period which included the wrap-up of Vatican 11 in the Catholic Church, the student revolution

on the streets of Paris, the suppressed Prague Spring movement against the USSR in Czechoslovakia, and massive protests in Australia against involvement in Vietnam. There was growing interest in an empowered citizenry. Spring was in the air. It was time for nation-building.

It was also time for freedom and authority in the schools, and that was the title of a landmark memorandum to principals of government schools in South Australia. Authored in August 1970 by Alby Jones, Director-General of Education, principals were described as being 'in undisputed control' of their schools and were challenged to consider local variations to subjects, timetables, organisation, governance and assessment within a centralised framework (Department of Education, South Australia, 1970). This coincided with an inquiry into education in South Australia by a committee chaired by Peter Karmel which reported in 1971 (Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, 1971). Shortly thereafter, of course, Peter Karmel served as Chair of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission.

### *Historic*

The Karmel Report asserted that 'antipathy towards and apathy about community participation in the governance of schooling is widespread throughout Australia. . . (p. 13). It is interesting to explore the context in historical perspective, for it reveals that there was a modest measure of local control before and after the creation of centralised systems in the late nineteenth century, but it was soon to wither, with less than favourable comparisons with other nations. This is illustrated in the case of Tasmania, and the international studies of Peter Goyen (New Zealand), and I. F. Kandel and Freeman Butts (United States).

The Education Department of Tasmania, responsible to a Minister of the Crown and with a permanent Director as chief executive, was created on January 1, 1886 following a Royal Commission which commenced in 1883 and the passing of the 1885 Education Act. Local Boards of Advice had been established in 1868 under an Act to make provision for a better education of the people of Tasmania, with responsibility for school records, minor repairs, raising attendances and collecting fees. The Royal Commission of 1883 had this to say about their role:

The position of members of Local Boards has been so completely false; so fertile of vexatious duties and irksome responsibilities; so barren of dignity and real usefulness, that eligible persons have either stood aloof altogether, or having accepted the position, have found it impossible to take continuous interest in their unprofitable labour (cited in Phillips, 1985, p. 77).

The Education Act of 1885 included provision for District Boards of Advice along lines recommended by the 1883 Royal Commission. However, their powers were curtailed following a critical report in 1904 by W. L. Neale, an Inspector of Schools from South Australia, who was invited to conduct a review of education in Tasmania. Neale was subsequently appointed Director of Education in 1905. His position on Boards became one issue in a Royal Commission which recommended his dismissal in 1909.

This state of affairs in Tasmania in respect to a local role was typical of the general condition in Australia at the time. Peter Goyen, Inspector of Schools for the Otago Education Board in New Zealand, and subsequently a member of the Royal Commission which recommended the dismissal of Neale, reported on education in Australia and New Zealand following his tour of the former in 1902. Commenting on 'the unwisdom of centralising in one city the entire management of a nation', he asserted that:

in New Zealand everybody is interested, because everybody shares in its management . . . and local interest is a living part of the system. There is nothing like it in Australia. In Victoria and other Australian States there are no School



Committees and no Education Boards, for the Boards of Advice answer to neither and so far as I could gather, have not a whit of influence, whether for good or for evil. The Department is everything and its influence everywhere, and every school is regarded not as a local institution in which every resident has a living interest, but as part and parcel of a huge machine controlled from the capital city . . . I do not hesitate to say that, in my judgement, the Australian Departments of Education are pursuing a policy that is highly detrimental to the intellectual life of the States (cited in Phillips, 1985, pp. 84 - 85).

International assessment of Australian education did not change over the next fifty years, as illustrated in the view of the distinguished American scholars I. F. Kandel (1938) and R. Freeman Butts (1955) who provided assessments in reports published by the Australian Council for Educational Research in 1938 and 1955, respectively. Butts wondered whether undue centralisation caused Australians to 'miss something of the vitality, initiative, creativeness and variety that would come if the doors and windows of discussion were kept more open all the way up and down the educational edifice' (Butts, 1955, p. 11 cited by Partridge, 1973, p. 67).

### **Response to the Karmel Report**

It is thus fair to conclude that Australia started from a low base in respect to devolution and a role for the community. Moreover, neither the Commonwealth nor the Australian (later Commonwealth) Schools Commission (ASC) could require the States to move in this direction. The ASC adopted the approach preferred by the Committee that access to special purpose grants should require the involvement of the community, as illustrated by the following expectations for the disbursement of grants for Disadvantaged Schools and Special Projects:

#### *Disadvantaged Schools*

9.40 It is not the Committee's intention that schools informed of their eligibility for supplementary grants should be entitled automatically to specific grants. Rather, a school or group of schools should be required to submit a proposal framed according to specific conditions. For example, there would have to be evidence that the program proposed involved changed approaches rather than being simply 'more of the same'; that there had been collaboration among staff, parents, relevant community groups and possibly students; and that experts had been consulted when available.

[Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, p. 104]

#### *Special Projects (for Fostering Change)*

. . . the Committee is proposing that funds should be available to support at the school level projects of an innovatory kind or with implications for change. Applications for financial support would be invited from individuals and groups, not only from teachers but from the community, so as to provide an opportunity for change to come from beyond present institutional frameworks. A proposal should contain a statement of the objectives of the project for which funds are requested, an explanation of the expected usefulness and likely consequences of the changes that it might bring about, and an indication of how the outcomes might be evaluated and disseminated. Also, an estimate of the cost of the project would be required.

[Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, pp. 127 - 128]

The Committee recommended that grant applications be judged by Education Departments or Boards of Trustees of Catholic Systemic Schools (for Disadvantaged Schools

Projects) and by a Special Projects Committee chaired by a member of the ASC (for Special Projects). The implementation of these recommendations marked the beginning of an era of submission writing for schools. There was a requirement for the involvement of the community in the preparation of proposals but approval of a central authority was required, with that authority being the State Education Department on the recommendation of its appointed committee or panel in the case of Disadvantaged Schools Projects.

In the years immediately following the release of the Karmel Report only three government school authorities took up to any noteworthy extent the cause of community involvement through structural arrangements for school councils or school boards. A rudimentary form of school councils was already in place in South Australia. Recommendations for school boards in the Australian Capital Territory (Hughes, 1973) coincided with the Karmel Report and these were implemented with a higher level of authority and responsibility than in any other system at the time. A range of options for school advisory councils was developed for adoption in Victoria in the mid-1970s.

### **The Restructuring Movement in the 1980s**

Devolution was a common element of the restructuring movement that began in the 1980s and continues to the present. For the most part recommendations arose from reviews of the efficiency and effectiveness of school administration in the various states and territories and they had their counterparts in other nations. In most instances these were conducted by individuals or organisations outside the school system. These recommendations are not addressed in detail in this paper except where they relate to changes in which I was personally involved, consistent with a primary purpose of the presentation. A comprehensive account of developments in the 1980s is given in a report of a project sponsored by the Research and Projects Committee of the Australian College of Education (ACE) that investigated the administrative reorganisation of public school governance in Australia (Harman, Beare and Berkeley, 1991).

The editors of the ACE report suggested that 'the emerging new model for the delivery of public education is likely to be through self-managed schools' as part of an overall reorganisation of the system:

Around Australia in system after system, and often because financial stringency and the states' straightened finances are forcing it, we are witnessing a paring down of the big central bureaucracies, which are divesting themselves of educator staff, who are then reassigned to regions, clusters and schools. . . .

At the same time, schools are being given increased legal and professional responsibilities, in the form of a global budget, wide discretion over funding, the responsibility to select their own staff as well as to fill promotion positions from the principal down, the management of the physical plant, and so on. Put simply, Australian *public* schools are becoming self-managing, and are more and more resembling private schools in their modes of governance and operation.

[Harman, Beare and Berkeley, 1991, pp. 310 - 311]

A self-managing school is a school in a system of education to which there has been decentralised a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions related to the allocation of resources within a centrally-determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities. Resources are defined broadly to include knowledge, technology, power, material, people, time, assessment, information and finance (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, p. 5; Bullock and Thomas, 1997, pp. 1-2).

A self-managing school is not an autonomous school nor is it a self-governing school, for each of these kinds of schools involve a degree of independence that is not provided in a

centrally-determined framework. The existence of a centrally-determined framework implies that a self-managing school is part of a system of schools, so the concept applies most readily to systems of government or public schools, or to systems of non-government or private schools where there has been decentralisation, such as in some systems of Catholic schools. Truly independent, non-systemic schools would ordinarily be considered self-governing schools.

Self-management is consistent with devolution of responsibility, in the sense the latter was proposed in the Karmel Report ('responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling'), but the context in which recommendations were made and developments unfolded are different in several important respects. The Karmel Report heralded a dramatic new empowerment of schools and their communities, underpinned by values of devolution, equality, diversity and community. The restructuring movement of the 1980s and 1990s was energised in large part by non-educators and was driven by concern for efficiency and effectiveness. The labels of 'corporate managerialism', 'economic rationalism' and 'the market-driven agenda of the New Right' were frequently pinned on the new reforms. There was a high level of consensus in the education and broader community on the directions proposed in the Karmel Report but recommendations in the more recent movement have been invariably contested, especially where devolution has involved a high level of decentralisation in respect to the size of the decentralised budget and a local role in the selection of staff. Further analysis along these lines, with assessment of outcomes and a longer term prognosis, is contained in a more focused consideration of projects in which I was personally involved.

A concern for the quality of schooling is common across the years. The Karmel Report was clear in this respect, referring to the three 'serious deficiencies in Australia's schools'. First was lack of resources; second was gross inequalities in opportunity and provision.

Thirdly, the quality of education leaves much to be desired. Many teachers have been inadequately trained and the provision for their professional development is frequently meagre. Curricula and teaching methods tend to be unresponsive to differences between pupils . . . (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, p. 139).

By the late 1990s, the concern for quality tended to be just as sweeping but, at the same time, more focused, as evidenced by the identification of significant numbers of students who do not attain standards of literacy in the early years of schooling. There is currently a high priority across the nation for curricula and teaching methods in literacy, with attendant professional development to help ensure that teachers are responsive to differences among pupils. In the intervening period, at the mid-point of the quarter century of developments under consideration in this paper, Peter Karmel addressed the issue of quality in schooling in his landmark 1985 report (Quality of Education Review Committee, 1985).

### **Selected Projects in Devolution (Self-Management): 1983 - 1998**

I was invited to comment on projects in devolution in which I had played a part. Here I give particular attention to projects in Victoria, first from 1984 to 1986 and later, from 1993 to 1996; and in Britain, Hong Kong and New Zealand from 1988 to 1993. The research base was laid in Tasmania in 1983 and this account commences with a review of that research for it reveals the foundation of our work in the Karmel Report.

#### *Effective Resource Allocation in Schools Project (ERASP) 1983*

Research under the title of the Effective Resource Allocation in Schools Project (ERASP) was carried out while I was at the University of Tasmania. It was funded as a Project of

National Significance by the Commonwealth Schools Commission. The school effectiveness movement was gathering momentum at this time, as was interest in how schools were allocating resources in their budgets, for it was in the 1970s that education authorities in Australia, like their counterparts in other nations, made funds available for schools to address the needs of particular groups of students, as recommended in the Karmel Report.

It may be helpful for me to note at this point that I was not in Australia during the 1970s, being a distant observer from Canada of events leading up to and following the Karmel Report. I was, however, involved in related work through doctoral research at the University of Alberta on decentralised school budgeting (Caldwell, 1977). The landmark reform in the Edmonton Public School District had its foundations around the time of the Karmel Report and I studied the subsequent pilot project in Edmonton and similar initiatives in Alberta. I visited school districts in California that pioneered site-based management.

ERASP was conducted in Tasmania and South Australia in 1983, these being the two states that had decentralised more resources for school operations than any other at that time (this research is reported in Caldwell, 1986; Curtis, 1986; Misko, 1986a; 1986b; Smith, 1986). Significantly, Tasmania had taken to heart the intention of the Karmel Report in respect to the devolution of responsibility on matters related to resources, and each school had a decentralised budget, but not a school council, although each was required to consult its community in preparing proposals for support from funds allocated by the Schools Commission.

In this research, panels of knowledgeable people nominated two groups of schools in each of the two states: those considered highly effective in a general sense, and those considered highly effective in the manner in which they allocated resources. Panels were provided with two sets of characteristics to guide their nomination, the first drawn from a comprehensive review of the literature on school effectiveness that was in existence at the time, the second from a review of literature on exemplary approaches to resource allocation. A feature of the second list was a demonstrated capacity to link the use of resources to the central purpose of the organisation which, in the case of schools, is learning. Many nominations were secured from public (government) and private (non-government) schools, and those that were nominated most frequently in each category were selected for study.

The school that was nominated most frequently in Tasmania was Rosebery District High School, a K - 10 school on the remote west coast of the state. Research revealed that, more than any other school, Rosebery had all of the characteristics of effective resource allocation, and all in the school community who participated in the study were able to articulate the approach that had been adopted. It was understandable that this approach featured in the recommendations of the Effective Resource Allocation in Schools Project.

The manner in which Rosebery developed its approach is highly significant in this reflection on the impact of the Karmel Report. The school was required to consult its community in preparing proposals for support from the Schools Commission. The Principal, Jim Spinks, determined that the policy, planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation processes that involved the community in such matters should extend to all aspects of school operations, and a school council was established to help achieve this purpose. He devised an ahead-of-its-time approach that enabled the allocation of all resources to be planned comprehensively and at the same time rather than in discrete categories as funds were received.

Tasmania was a pioneering state in adopting state-wide student achievement tests, in this instance the 10N and 10R, and 14N and 14R, being tests for 10 and 14-year old students, respectively, in numeracy and literacy. These tests were designed by the Australian Council for Educational Research. Literacy levels were initially relatively low

at Rosebery and the school obtained a Priority Project grant to address the concern. Using the distinctive team approach to policy, planning, budgeting and evaluating, funds were targeted at particular activities, with the result that literacy scores improved to the extent that the school disqualified itself from receiving further funds from this source. This is a relatively rare phenomenon. It is precisely this capacity that is sought in all schools now as efforts are made to introduce standards-based approaches to school reform and to connect self-management to purposeful efforts to improve learning.

### *Model for Self-Management*

The model for self-management that emerged from ERASP was a cycle that called for a school to determine goals, formulate policies, make annual plans, allocate resources, implement plans through programs of learning and teaching, and evaluate outcomes. Plans were based on programs, defined by normal patterns of work in the school, most of which were areas of curriculum. There were clearly defined roles for different groups. The 'policy group' set goals, formulated policies, approved budgets and shared in the conduct of program evaluations. Program teams, formed mostly of teachers, were involved in each of these activities but were mainly responsible for preparing program plans and program budgets. Programs were implemented in the normal day-to-day work of the school. Program teams had major responsibility for the design and implementation of program evaluation.

Special aspects that had considerable appeal were the guidelines for carrying out these tasks, including the view that no policy should exceed one page, no program plan and budget should exceed two pages, no minor evaluation should exceed one page, and no major evaluation should exceed two pages. The distinction between minor and major evaluations was important, with the former carried out annually by members of program teams and the latter carried out on a five year cycle, with members of program teams joined by others, from the school council or outside the school where special expertise may be found.

Two features of the model are noteworthy. First, the relatively tight connection between the planning and budgeting process and activities related to learning and teaching. This was not self-management as an end in itself but self-management that was linked to what occurred in the classroom. This was an era when there were no curriculum and standards frameworks and few expectations that schools engage in program evaluation in such a systematic fashion. Second, the emphasis on teachers working in teams that were more than work groups or committees, addressing important tasks based on targets and outcomes. The concept of the high performing team is endemic in the management literature in the 1990s.

### *School-based Program Budgeting in Victoria 1984-1986*

The findings from ERASP were the focus of a summer conference at the University of Tasmania in January 1984 attended by system and school personnel from South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. There was immediate take up in Victoria where the Labor Government led by John Cain was making major changes in school education through Minister for Education, Robert Fordham. Changes to the Education Act in 1983 had given school councils the power to set educational policy for the school, within guidelines provided by the Minister, and to approve the school budget. At the same time, the Government had introduced a form of program budgeting to all public sector services and sought a training program for schools to develop the requisite knowledge and skills for principals and other school leaders as well as for school councils.

The model for self-management described above provided a framework for the training program, with Jim Spinks and this writer invited to serve as consultant trainers. The model was formally styled the Collaborative School Management Cycle. We conducted more than 50 training programs, each of two days, for about 5,000 school councillors,

principals, teachers and in some instances, students, from about 1,200 schools. These were held in almost every part of the state in every setting, urban and rural, large and small, and highly advantaged and highly disadvantaged communities. The Education Department of Tasmania published the workshop program, with its foundation in research, in a book titled *Policy Making and Planning for School Effectiveness* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1986) with an accompanying workshop package. The model was intended as a guide rather than prescription and every conceivable adaptation was soon evident. The programs were received well and the take up of program budgeting, with adaptations of the model, was relatively high.

One limitation of the context was that relatively few resources were decentralised to the school level in Victoria. There was an expectation toward the end of our consultancy in Victoria that more funds would be decentralised, especially with the release of the report *Taking Schools into the 1990s*. However, the opposition of teacher unions, parent organisations and some bureaucrats led to formal rejection by the government (see Government of Victoria, 1986).

### *Britain, New Zealand and Hong Kong 1988 - 1993*

Soon after this rejection, it became apparent that governments in Britain and New Zealand would proceed with a relatively high level of decentralisation within a centrally-determined framework. Falmer Press acknowledged the 'fit' between the approach described in our book published by the Education Department of Tasmania and the capacities that would be required of schools for the implementation of local management of schools in Britain with the passing of the Education Reform Act in 1988. The Education Department in Tasmania released its right to the book which was published in 1988 with little amendment as *The Self-Managing School* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988).

It was only at this stage that the concept of 'the self-managing school' was adopted, this being suggested by David Reynolds, now Professor of Education at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who served as Series Editor for Falmer Press at the time. Reynolds is eminent in the field of school effectiveness and currently a key adviser to the Labour Government in Britain, serving as the Chair of the Numeracy Task Force.

The book formed the basis of extensive involvement in training, with most conducted by Jim Spinks in Britain and New Zealand. He visited Britain on three occasions from 1988 to 1990, for a total of nearly twelve months of training programs for officers, governors, principals and teachers in more than one-third of the local education authorities. He also worked with about 10,000 parents, principals and teachers in an extended consultancy in New Zealand in 1989. In 1992 and 1993 we conducted a number of training programs for principals and managers of schools in Hong Kong where the School Management Initiative called for schools to adopt a more systematic approach to planning and resource allocation.

### *Refining the Model for Self-Management*

It became apparent during our work with *The Self-Managing School* that the model should be refined in important ways for effective self-management in the 1990s. We accomplished this in *Leading the Self-Managing School* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992). There was a need to take account of the dramatic change in the external environment for schools. Strong links were being made in the corporate community between knowledge and skills required for success in a global economy in the post-industrial age and the programs being offered by schools. More and more was expected of schools, and any expectation that there would be a period of consolidation following the changes of the 1980s were soon dashed.

Schools needed a capacity to manage continuing change and set priorities rather than continue to 'add on' to existing programs. Systems were making substantial demands on

schools but schools were also expected to respond to local needs and priorities. We proposed two mechanisms for dealing with this situation. First was the concept of the school charter. We had been impressed by the potential of the school charter from our work in New Zealand but were concerned about the length and complexity of these documents. We wondered if there would indeed be an ongoing link between the charter and programs for learning and teaching. We therefore proposed a school charter, but one that would be relatively short and simple, perhaps no longer than 20 pages, that would set out the nature of the school and its current and expected profile in respect to students and programs. It would then set out in general terms how it would address central and local priorities. Whilst the original model for self-management encouraged schools to set priorities and have a multi-year time frame, we felt this ought to be made more explicit, hence our proposal for schools to have a 3 - 5 year management plan, that may also be described as a school development plan or a strategic plan. The annual cycle of self-management remained the same, except for some changes in terminology to reinforce the focus on learning and teaching.

We believed it was important to make clear what ought to be expected of leaders in the self-managing school and proposed four dimensions: strategic, cultural, educational and responsive. Strategic leadership calls for a capacity to see 'the big picture', to discern the megatrends, to see the implications for the school, to build a capacity for others to do the same in their areas of interest, and to establish structures and processes to deal with the implications in the school setting. We sensed that principals and other school leaders were not generally aware of the momentous changes affecting society in the late twentieth century and that they ought to take the lead to ensure that all in the school community gained an understanding of what was happening and why, with appropriate responses at the school level. The management counterpart to strategic leadership is associated with the development of the school charter and the longer-term management plan.

Cultural leadership is concerned with changing in a fundamental sense 'the way things are done around here'. First, of lesser importance, is to lead the change in culture from dependence on the centre to a culture of self-management. Of greater importance is to help change a culture to one that focuses all energies on improving the quality of learning and teaching. It is a culture that accepts the need to measure and monitor achievement, to set targets and priorities, and prepare and implement plans to address these.

Educational leadership is a broad concept but we chose to focus on the notion of 'building a learning community'. We outlined several strategies for building the capacity of teachers and others in the school community to provide programs in teaching and learning of the highest quality. The focus was very much on professional development. A concern for educational leadership was evident in our view of the self-managing school, which was not the adoption of a new approach to management borrowed from the corporate sector, but a framework at the school level for action to improve learning and teaching. This linkage has not been made in most settings.

The fourth dimension is responsive leadership or 'coming to terms with accountability'. Our case was built on the 'right to know' about the achievements of the school that was held by many individuals, groups and institutions in society, not just teachers and parents on receipt of a report of their child's progress. We endorsed the approach to minor and major program evaluations that was a feature of *The Self-Managing School* and accepted that a wider range of achievement tests was likely to be the order of the day in the new environment for school education. We supported these developments, based on our premise of the 'right to know', but took a strong stand against unethical or fraudulent use of 'league tables' based on raw scores from system-wide tests.

#### *Schools of the Future in Victoria 1993 - 1997*

There was a change in government in Victoria within months of the release of *Leading the Self-Managing School* and I had the opportunity to apply the recommendations of the



book in that state when invited to serve as a member of the Task Force that helped design the Schools of the Future program (Hayward, 1993). In one sense, the Liberal National Coalition led by Jeffrey Kennett, with Don Hayward as Minister for Education, took up the stalled agenda that followed the rejection of recommendations in the *Taking Schools into the 1990s* report of 1986. Schools of the Future is, however, a more comprehensive reform than envisaged in 1986, for it has a clearly defined curriculum and standards framework and an approach to accountability that institutionalises the approach to minor and major evaluations, with the Annual Report and Triennial Report, each of which utilises a repertoire of performance indicators.

My involvement in implementation of Schools of the Future has been in several areas. I chaired the Education Committee of the School Global Budget Research Project that made recommendations to successive Ministers for Education on how funds should be allocated to schools ('how the cake is to be cut' not 'the size of the cake') (see Education Committee, 1994, 1995, 1996). I also served on the Steering Committee of the Cooperative Research Project, a consortium of the Education Department, Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, Victorian Primary Principals Association and the University of Melbourne that studied the processes and outcomes of Schools of the Future. Seven state-wide surveys were conducted (see Cooperative Research Project, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 1998) and 17 more focused investigations were completed or are in progress. I also worked with the late Max Sawatzki from 1993 to 1997 in presenting five-day residential training programs for about 1100 principals on the theme 'Creating a School of the Future'. I recently co-authored a book with former Minister Hayward that deals with the design, implementation and outcomes of Schools of the Future and proposes a policy framework for the further reform of schools (Caldwell and Hayward, 1998).

### **Outcomes of Devolution**

The outcomes of devolution within a broadly-based approach to self-management have been well documented (see for example, Bryk, 1998; Bullock and Thomas, 1998; Caldwell, 1998a; Caldwell and Hayward, 1998; Caldwell and Spinks, 1998; Cooperative Research Project, 1998; Levacic, 1995; Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998). The focus in this section is on levels of acceptance, driving and constraining forces, impact on learning outcomes, and mechanisms for resource allocation.

#### *Levels of Acceptance*

While there are many issues to be resolved, devolution has been broadly accepted and is apparently irreversible in places where there has been experience over several years with all elements of a comprehensive approach in place in all schools. Evidence of a new settlement on self-management is particularly strong in Britain where all major political parties went to the 1997 general election promising to extend the local management of schools, and Labour has followed through with a proposal to decentralise almost 100% of funds to schools in a new scheme to be known simply as 'devolved funding' (Department for Education and Employment, 1998).

Acceptance has been particularly strong among principals, with a large majority not wishing to return to previous arrangements. In Victoria, the most recent survey of a large representative sample of principals in the Cooperative Research Project indicates that 89% hold this view (Cooperative Research Project, 1998). At the same time, however, principals in Victoria along with their colleagues elsewhere report increased workloads; lack of flexibility in the centrally-determined frameworks, especially in respect to staffing; and lack of resources.

The approach remains contentious in places where experience has been short, or where only a few elements of a comprehensive approach have been introduced in a limited number of schools, or when implementation occurred at the same time as tough measures



were taken by governments to address budget deficits or soaring debt. In some instances it has been a step or two forward and a step or two back, as has been the case in aspects of the reform in New South Wales, New Zealand and, more recently, in Queensland.

### *Driving and Constraining Forces*

In a study conducted this year for the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Caldwell, 1998b; reported also in Caldwell and Spinks, 1998), I identified twenty forces impinging on efforts to provide greater autonomy for schools, of which eight are driving forces and twelve are constraining forces (see Caldwell, 1994 for an earlier analysis of driving forces across five nations).

The eight driving forces include changes in the role of government in the delivery of public services in the face of concerns about efficiency and effectiveness; the capacity of state governments to deliver more autonomy within current legislative frameworks where there is the will to do so; the preferences of professional associations of school principals; competition policy that challenges the current discriminatory funding arrangements in the use of public funds for private schools; the building of social capital in relation to school education and the burgeoning home school movement; knowledge and skills of staff; technology; and flexibility in workplace arrangements.

The twelve constraining forces include role specification and accountability requirements; inertia at the state level in taking up capacity in existing legislation and tendencies for re-centralisation in the implementation of policy on decentralisation; selection of staff to meet the needs of a system; curriculum and standards frameworks; registration requirements and the employment of teachers; the stance of teacher unions; the industrial relations framework; Commonwealth-State arrangements and relationships; funding mechanisms for public and private schools; obligations under international agreements; knowledge and skills of teachers; values in public policy and the issue of trust.

Unless a significant initiative appears on the scene to either add to the driving forces or mitigate the constraining forces, there is unlikely to be a change to current patterns of authority, responsibility and accountability in Australia. The Schools of the Future program in Victoria, with an option for a few schools under the Self-Governing Schools Act of 1998, is likely to be the high water mark in school autonomy for the foreseeable future.

It will take a 'significant initiative' to change the balance of driving and constraining forces. Possibilities include:

- the appearance on the scene of a new reforming government at the state level, with initiatives that extend autonomy, possibly on the lines of charter schools in the United States;
- a change in leadership and world view among teacher unions, as is starting to occur in other places, notably the United States, where support for charter schools is now bi-partisan, extending to unions;
- removing distinctions between government and non-government schools, especially in relation to the funding mechanism, and in other ways fostering a culture that minimises differences and reinforces autonomy;
- application or extension of the Workplace Relations Act to provide for Workplace Agreements at the school level;

- allocating Commonwealth grants directly to schools rather than to the state, as is currently the case in allocations for independent, non-systemic, non-government schools;
- a dramatic expansion of business and other corporate support for schools that similarly targets funds to schools rather than systems, especially schools where there are high priorities for improvement; and
- building a culture that values local decision-making based on student needs by targeting professional development funds directly to schools and profiling the achievements of high performing schools.

### *Devolution and Learning Outcomes*

While a range of benefits has been reported in research on devolution, especially when it is part of a broad approach to school system re-structuring, there has been until recently little conclusive evidence of the impact on student learning. The findings of Bullock and Thomas (1997) in relation to the reform in Britain are typical:

It may be that the most convincing evidence of the impact of local management is on the opportunities which it has provided for managing the environment and resources for learning, both factors that can act to support the quality of learning in schools. What remains elusive, however, is clear-cut evidence of these leading through to direct benefits on learning, an essential component if we are to conclude that it is contributing to higher levels of efficiency. (Bullock and Thomas, 1997, p. 217)

Their final conclusion offers little advance on findings earlier and elsewhere:

If the standard and quality of learning is to be at the centre of education — and it is surely the key test of decentralisation — it is not apparent that the policies and practices of decentralisation [under local management in Britain ] are adequately geared to its achievement. (Bullock and Thomas, 1997, p. 222)

It is important to note at this point that the Karmel Report did not claim a direct link between devolution and improved learning outcomes. Devolution was a value that underpinned a strategy that called for the targeting of funds, with proposals for resourcing to take account of views at the local level. It was assumed that such a strategy would, along with others that were subsequently pursued by the Schools Commission, help address the three serious deficiencies identified in the Report, namely, inadequate resources, inequalities in provision and opportunity, and quality of education that fell short of expectations. There was no explicit 'theory of action' that connected devolution to learning in direct cause-and-effect fashion.

An understanding of how self-management may impact on student outcomes may be gained by examining the linkages or gearing that must be achieved, and recent evidence is promising, especially from Chicago (Bryk, 1998) and Victoria (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998; Cooperative Research Project, 1998). It confirms a 'theory of action' that involves 'backward mapping' from learning outcomes to a range of contextual, input and process factors, several of which are enhanced with a capacity for self-management (the foundations of such a 'theory of action' may be found in earlier work by Cheng, 1996; Goodlad, 1984; Miles, 1987; and Sizer, 1984). These are mainly concerned with school-based selection and professional development of teachers, with schools building a capacity to set targets and implement strategies for improvement based on the systematic collection of data about student achievement. In other words, the structural reform that delivers a greater capacity for self-management through devolution of responsibility to the school level must be linked or geared to what occurs in the classroom, and this means

and those who support their efforts taking up the now robust knowledge on school and classroom effectiveness and improvement. Doctoral research in progress at the University of Melbourne has shown how these links are made in primary schools in the Schools of the Future program (see, for example, Wee, forthcoming).

### *Mechanisms for the Allocation of Resources*

The Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission pioneered the development of an index of need to help relate the targeted allocation of resources to student need based on socio-economic disadvantage. Further developmental work enabled the Commonwealth, states and systems of non-government schools to allocate funds in the Disadvantaged Schools Program. More recent refinement has enabled the approach to be utilised in the calculation of allocations to school global budgets in the highly devolved Schools of the Future program in Victoria. An index of need guides the allocation of funds in one of the six components of the school global budget. Whereas the early work described in the Karmel Report was based on census data for people living in the feeder area for each school, current efforts in Victoria allow data on six variables to be collected for each individual student. This is an outcome of the three-year School Global Budget Research Project (see Education Committee, 1994, 1995, 1996).

There is international interest in the development of needs-based funding formulae, with a report to be published later this year by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of UNESCO (Ross and Levacic, 1998). This project draws on experience with devolved funding in Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. It is directed by Ken Ross, now based at the IIEP, who did much of the early development work on an index of need while at the Australian Council for Educational Research. The Ross Index is still used in several school systems in Australia.

### **Realising the Vision**

Much of the vision for devolution in the Karmel Report has been brought to realisation in Australia over the last twenty-five years. The impact has been considerable although the matter of direct cause-and-effect impact on learning remains problematic. The 'theory of action' that was implicit in the Karmel Report has been made more explicit as experience has been gained, especially in settings where a high level of devolved funding has been introduced within a comprehensive and coherent framework of curriculum, standards and accountabilities.

Despite this progress, it is clear that devolution or self-management can be no more than a structural pre-condition for further effort to achieve an impact on learning. For this reason, it is best to see current efforts at school reform as occurring on several tracks, as we do in the third of our books on the self-managing school entitled *Beyond the Self-Managing School* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998). We identified three tracks for change in school education: Track 1 is building systems of self-managing schools; Track 2 is an unrelenting focus on learning outcomes; Track 3 is creating schools for the knowledge society. We are well down Track 1. Momentum must now build for further reform on Tracks 2 and 3.

### *Raising the Bar*

The three serious deficiencies in Australia's schools noted in the Karmel Report (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, p. 139) remain, namely, lack of sufficient resources, gross inequalities in provision and opportunity, and quality of schooling that falls short of expectations. The problem is that the bar has been raised as far as expectations are concerned, for progress since 1973 has been undeniable.

It is my view that further progress will not be made until a new view of public education is constructed, one that is more consistent with the notion of 'education for the public

good' (see Mansbridge, 1998 for a comprehensive analysis of the concept of 'public good'). For many people, public education can never be other than a system of schools that are fully publicly owned and fully publicly funded, where teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning are delivered entirely by a public authority. We have allowed such a view to be sustained for too long in this country at the cost of a wider sense of responsibility for schools.

The lack of community involvement in Australia's schools was described nearly a century ago by Peter Goyen, a visiting inspector, cited earlier in this paper, who contrasted the situation with his native New Zealand. He believed that a school should be 'a local institution in which every resident has a living interest' (cited in Phillips, 1985, pp. 84 - 85). Today we call this 'living interest' the social capital of the school (Coleman and Hoffer, 1986). Social capital will continue to diminish so long as we rely on an outmoded view of public education.

Expressed another way, exclusive reliance on government may have served to weaken civil society, being the

complex welter of intermediate institutions, including businesses, voluntary associations, educational institutions, clubs, unions, media, charities, and churches — [that] builds, in turn, on the family, the primary instrument by which people are socialised into their culture and given the skills that allow them to live in the broader society and through which the values and knowledge of that society are transmitted across the generations. (Fukuyama, 1995, pp. 4 - 5)

Fukuyama refers to 'high trust' and 'low trust' nations according to the strength of their civil society. He contends that some countries have lost their 'trust' through the decline of civil society. He places the United States in this category, even though civil society in that country is very strong, with the total of funds that support it exceeding the gross national product of all but seven nations, cutting 'a wide swath through society' (Rifkin, 1995, p. 240 - 241). Australia may also lie in this category, with near total reliance on the public sector in government schooling serving to strip away much of the support of civil society, or as Mark Latham has put it: 'In the design of the post-war welfare state, with the primacy of the state public sector as an expression of collective action, the strength of public commonality has been allowed to decline' (Latham, 1998, p. 309).

### *The Third Way*

Fortunately, there is increasing awareness of the importance of civil society (Rifkin, 1995), high trust (Fukuyama, 1995), volunteerism (Brown, 1998), and public mutuality (Latham, 1998). 'The third way' is the name given to a collection of strategies to turn awareness into action.

In the third way, new arrangements for the public good involve neither exclusive reliance on government (Old Left) nor exclusive reliance on the market (New Right). UK Prime Minister Tony Blair describes the third way in terms of an absolute adherence to basic values and a key belief in a strong community for achieving individual advancement. In how to get there: 'We should be infinitely adaptable and imaginative in the means of applying those values. There are no ideological pre-conditions, no pre-determined veto on means. What counts is what works' (cited by Midgley, 1998, p. 44). New Labour in Britain is following the third way in education.

In Australia, we now need to swing the full resources of society behind our schools and, without venturing too far into the territory of another speaker, this may mean removing the distinction between government and non-government schools so that all are resourced to achieve high standards on the basis of educational need and capacity to contribute. There should, at the same time, be a greater commitment by government to the resourcing of a more expansive and inclusive view of public education, and this will require a vibrant

economy, a broader revenue base, reduction in levels of public debt, and more effective relations between Commonwealth and States (see Caldwell, 1998c for a development of this theme).

Devolution of responsibility as envisaged in the Karmel Report is but a building block in this larger endeavour, and much remains to be done to complete the structure. It is surely time for a new strategy to energise our efforts to shape the future of schools in a new era of public education. Such a strategy will be as sweeping in its vision and as profound in its impact as the Karmel Report.

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# NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA

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*SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA: 1973-1998*

*THE 25 YEARS SINCE THE KARMELO REPORT<sup>1</sup>*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is not possible to discuss the importance of the Karmel Report for non-government schools in Australia without considering the historical context in which these schools developed and the critical juncture they had reached by the 1970s. This paper will focus its attention on the historical development of Catholic schools with some reference to schools of other religious denominations. It will argue that the two critical historical points for non-government schools occurred in the 1870s and a century later in the 1970s. The decision of colonial legislatures to create from the 1870s a system of government schools that were 'free, compulsory and secular', and to cease financial support to denominational schools, resulted in a triadic provision in state, Catholic and independent (largely denominational) schools.

This paper will document the strategies used to establish non-government schools in the latter half of the nineteenth century and to support them in the first half of the twentieth century. It will argue that post-WW2 demographics such as population increases (due to the rising Catholic birth rate and to migration), when combined with internal changes in the Catholic Church, put Catholic education under acute strain. The 1973 Report of the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission heralded some timely relief. The enunciation of values such as equality and diversity, the acceptance of public and private schooling, and the introduction of a range of programs from General Recurrent Grants to Teacher Development, provided a philosophical and policy context in which Catholic education could regenerate itself.

Catholic and independent schools have benefited from the ongoing commitment of the major political parties to partially resourcing a 'dual' system of schooling. Arguably the 'Karmel' values dominated education in Australia until 1996. Their sustained influence on Australian education will be examined. The election of a Coalition government saw a considerable refocusing of the policy agenda with an emphasis on choice and market influences in education.

An examination of participation and retention rates over the past quarter century indicates that there has been a shift in enrolment patterns among the three sectors. Some of the commentary accompanying that shift will be examined. This paper argues that conceptions of public and private are altering with the influence of the 'new right' agenda and changes to public sector management. Resorting to the sectarian battleground of the past will not stop these trends. A more productive orientation is to focus our energies on the Karmel goal of equality for all Australian students.

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank Vin Faulkner and Frank Rogan, for their oral histories of the Karmel era and its impact on Catholic education.

## 2.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Early colonial Governors in Australia were preoccupied with establishing and managing the penal system. Little attention was given to education until there was a patent need. The first schools were conducted by clergy, largely Anglican. When a Church and Schools Corporation was established in New South Wales in 1826 with an Anglican cleric as its head there were protests of bias and favoritism from the Rev. Dunmore Lang, a Presbyterian Minister and from Fr J. Therry, a Catholic priest. During the 1830s and 1840s three attempts to introduce a general system of education failed. Finally in 1848 a national system was established, comprising two distinct boards: the National School Board, and the Denominational School Board. Funding was provided for both, though it varied in quantity and consistency.

The goldrushes of the 1850s created new affluence and the pressure to provide education for an expanding but mobile populace. One of the early tasks of politicians in the new colony of Victoria was to establish a Select Committee in July 1852 to report on educational provision in the dual system. The Committee recommended a single board, however, the Catholic Vicar-General Dr Geoghegan protested that Catholics had to have their own schools so that religious instruction could be an integral part of students' lives. The Victorian *Common Schools Act* of 1862 and the New South Wales *Public Schools Act* of 1866 brought varying degrees of State control over denominational schools.

However, with growing secularism, it was ideological rather than legislative measures that had the greater impact.<sup>2</sup> Barcan (1980) traces the influence of liberalism and democratic sentiment on the growth of secularism in Australia in the mid nineteenth century. The secularist position was fuelled by a belief in the separation of Church and State, arguments for greater efficiency, and rising anti-Catholic sentiment.

*Social antagonisms reinforced political, religious and economic currents. The Roman Catholic Church was strongly associated with Irish and lower class immigrants. The social prejudices of middle-class and lower middle-class dissenters – Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists – strengthened their resolve for a secular system of elementary schools.*

*The Catholic Church in Australia was itself in the process of change. The influx of Irish immigrants, and the growth of liberal and democratic feeling weakened the English upper-class leadership of the Catholic hierarchy.* (Barcan 1980: 98)

The case for greater State control of education was strengthened by the liberal commitment to universal education, by pressures to find measures to end child labour, and by concerns regarding irregular student attendance. Victoria was the first colony to introduce its Education Act, in 1872. Education was to be 'free, compulsory and secular' and funding for denominational schools was abolished.<sup>3</sup> Other colonies

<sup>2</sup> Clark 1963; Barcan 1980; Collins 1986; Campion 1987.

<sup>3</sup> The three pillars of State education were not cast in the absolute terms of the 1990s. In Victoria compulsory attendance was for 6-15 year olds for 120 days per year; basic education was free,

followed in quick succession – Queensland in 1875, South Australia in 1878, New South Wales in 1880, and Tasmania and Western Australia in 1883.

The hierarchy of the Catholic church were committed to schooling which integrated religious and general education, and were bound by Pope Pius IX's 1864 Syllabus of Errors that forbade Catholic involvement in mixed schools. They railed against 'godless compulsory education'<sup>4</sup> and predicted the dire consequences of secular schools, 'because they are the seed-plots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness'.<sup>5</sup> This position left them with little choice but to establish their own schools.

*If it was to be war – and that is how Catholics saw it – the Catholic community were unwilling to give up without a fight. But how could this community, still noticeably working class, manage to run its own school system without aid? Where would it find teachers? How would it pay them? The answer was simple, if heroic: nuns and brothers, vowed to poverty would make it work. (Campion 1987: 35)*

This reliance on religious orders and the contributions of parishioners was sufficient to maintain basic provision in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>6</sup> However, population increases due to the post-War baby boom and the high number of Catholics amongst immigrants put the system under severe strain. Table 1 illustrates the rapid increase in numbers in one Archdiocese.

**Table 1: Catholic population and student numbers, Archdiocese of Melbourne, 1939-1961**

Year	Catholic Population	Primary Students	Secondary Students	Total Students
1939	250,000	34,722	7,500	40,272
1948	303,571	37,136	8,090	45,226
1955	421,543	54,392	18,108	72,520
1961	525,000	71,528	25,838	98,621

Source: Archdiocese of Melbourne

While government schools were faced with similar enrolment pressures, the situation in Catholic schools was exacerbated by growing staff shortages, large class sizes, insufficient and sometimes inadequate buildings, and the low salaries of lay staff.

Vatican II which began in 1962 caused many religious to question their role as religious and in schools. In 1963 religious constituted 51.2 per cent teaching staff in Melbourne Parish Primary schools, by 1971 this had fallen to 32.1 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Their exodus and increased numbers created staffing shortages and financial strains.

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however, fees were charged for more advanced subjects, and religious instruction could be provided out of school hours. In New South Wales, 3d. per week per child was charged, children were expected to attend for 70 out of 120 days, and denominational instruction was allowed. (Barcan 1980)

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Goold 1872, cited in Barcan 1980.

<sup>5</sup> 1879 Joint Pastoral Letter of Australian Catholic Bishops, cited in Barcan 1980.

<sup>6</sup> In 1850 there were some 200 religious in Australia, by 1950 there were 13,000. (Fogarty 1959)

<sup>7</sup> Currently religious constitute 2 per cent of staff in Catholic schools.

Enrolments in primary classes dropped from 102,000 in 1965 to 95,000 in 1974 because provision could not be maintained. Amongst the strategies adopted were advising parents to enroll children in government schools for the first few years, then accepting them from grade two or three, only providing classes until Grade 8 and having large classes<sup>8</sup>. The parlous state of Catholic schools at the time was described as a 'national disgrace' by the Karmel committee.

The system was at breaking point and hard decisions had to be taken. In 1971 the nine staff of the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne produced a discussion paper for community debate, *The Future for a School System: A Plan for the Archdiocese of Melbourne*. The paper outlined the challenges in relation to staffing, recruitment, facilities and finances. It considered options for the future including 'total cover' (a place for every Catholic child who wanted a primary and secondary education); total cover at certain levels (possibly only primary); partial cover (for example grades 4-8) and total withdrawal. The authors of the report recommended total cover at levels to be determined by community consultation.

*In view of the fact that the present policy of partial cover at all levels leads to discrimination and has caused unreasonable strain on all sections of the Catholic community, on their persons and in material ways, this policy should be replaced by one aiming at total cover at a level which is determined to be the most vital and possible one for us to hold with appropriate government assistance. (Catholic Education Office 1971)*

The issue of State Aid was back on the agenda. The 1955 split in the Labor Party resulted in the Democratic Labor Party becoming the voice of Catholics in some states. The DLP actively lobbied for State Aid. The campaign was enlivened by dramatic actions such as the decision in Goulburn in 1962 to close Catholic schools for a week and enroll the students in government schools. However, it is likely that the quiet lobbying of individuals such as Archbishop James Carroll in Sydney was more influential. In 1963 the New South Wales Labor Government offered indirect assistance for non-government school students in the form of scholarships. In the same year Prime Minister Menzies offered Commonwealth scholarships for students in government and non-government schools and grants to all schools for the building of science blocks. In 1964 the Commonwealth made available to non-government secondary schools grants for the building of libraries. By the mid-sixties individual state governments were offering modest direct grants to non-government schools.<sup>9</sup>

The climate in which the Karmel committee were to undertake its deliberations was significantly different to the bitter sectarianism of the 1870s. By then the State Aid debate was largely a Catholic debate, with 82 per cent of non-government schools Catholic.<sup>10</sup>

*The diminished ideological vigour since the 1950s had lessened anti-Catholic feeling and taken the sting out of sectarianism. Two decades of prosperity and full employment had weakened class and sectarian rivalry, and had also made state aid economically feasible. Political changes were also important. The Catholic section of the population was now a larger minority than ever before,*

<sup>8</sup> The decision was taken in 1965 to limit class size to 50. Older religious have recollections of class sizes of 90-100 in the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>9</sup> Western Australia and New South Wales in 1965, Victoria and Tasmania in 1967.

<sup>10</sup> Of the 2128 non-government schools, 1752 were Catholic.

*one that could not be ignored...Public opinion, if not clearly in favour of state aid, had become at least apathetic...*

*The non-Catholic corporate schools and colleges, somewhat to their surprise and even embarrassment, found themselves beneficiaries of state aid. Their economic need was less than that of Catholic schools and their sponsoring churches had long opposed the principle of state aid. But in almost all cases these schools accepted aid.*(Barcan 1980: 319, 321)

### **3.0 SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA: REPORT OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS COMMISSION**

In its 1972 election platform Labor committed itself to increased education expenditure and to the promotion of equality. Upon attaining office it quickly established an interim committee to report on the educational needs of **all** Australian schools. The committee was asked to recommend priorities among identified needs, and processes for addressing them. The publication of the interim committee's report *Schools in Australia* in May 1973 was greeted with widespread acclaim. The committee had undertaken a detailed analysis of the number of schools, enrolments, class size, teacher qualifications, and expenditure, before recommending on needs and priorities. The committee placed the concept of 'need' at the heart of its funding approach.

*The Committee has gauged the needs of the schools in terms of the resources used in them as compared with defined standards. The Committee believes that this is a practical approach by which a school with relatively few resources can reasonably be identified as in 'need' of more assistance than one with relatively many resources.* (Karmel 1973: para 5.13)

The generous funding proposed for government schools in 1974 (69.8 per cent of the total) and the focus on equality and need, secured the support of advocates of government schools and diminished residual hostilities to State Aid. The attempt of the Interim Committee to preclude the most wealthy private schools from funding, while defeated in the Senate, had important symbolic impact. The issue was now about rich and poor schools, not government and non-government schools.

The values and perspectives underpinning the Report sat well with Catholic social teaching and with administrative practices in schools. Given the Catholic principle of subsidiarity and the local ownership of school sites by parishes and religious orders, **devolution of responsibility** was philosophically congruent and it was already well established in states such as Victoria. **Equality** is a principle embedded in Catholic teaching often expressed as the dignity of the human person.<sup>11</sup> **Diversity and public and private schooling** accepted the century-old position of the Bishops that Catholic parents had a right (and a responsibility) to educate their children in Catholic schools. **Community involvement** is central to the operation of parish primary schools and

<sup>11</sup> Of course there were tangible benefits to this value position, such as differential funding to address inequality.

accommodates the view that parents are the first and continuing educators of their children. The Committee's definition of the **Special purposes of schooling** 'the acquisition of skills and knowledge, initiation into the cultural heritage, the valuing of rationality and the broadening of opportunities to respond to and to participate in artistic endeavours' (para 2.21) sat well with Catholic views of schooling.

The establishment of General Recurrent Grants scheme for government and non-government schools provided a desperately needed injection of funds to Catholic schools and the promise of funding stability. The requirement that funds be delivered as block grants forced a rapid bureaucratisation of Catholic education and gave the sector authorities the capacity to further distribute according to more specifically identified need. These changes were foreshadowed at the first national conference on Catholic education held in Armidale (NSW) in 1972 where senior educators considered strategies and options for the future.

At the local level the Disadvantaged Schools Program enabled low socio-economic school communities to design and implement programs to enrich the educational provision of students in their care. The Innovations Program and the In-service Program provided opportunities for all teachers to create new approaches to their practice and to renew their skills. This was a heady time to be involved in education. All teachers had opportunities for professional engagement and those in Catholic schools could move beyond considerations of survival.

## **4.0 THE IMPACT OF SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA**

### **4.1 Quality in all Schools**

The Karmel agenda was comprehensive, progressive and egalitarian. The report established a common resource standard for all schools which was higher than existing resource levels. Programs aimed at positive discrimination such as the Special Education and Disadvantaged Schools Program allocated additional funding to assist schools provide additional services to disadvantaged and disabled students. The scheme of innovation grants provided opportunities for self-selected resourceful schools and teachers to try new ways of doing things. A culture of progressivism and change was encouraged. Over the next two decades successive Commonwealth departments of education added Specific Purpose Programs to address diverse issues such as rural isolation, gender and language study. We do not have longitudinal data sets in Australia to help us evaluate the impact of these programs on student learning. However there is evidence from evaluations that they stimulated local innovation and energised practitioners. The intersection of Karmel funding for Specific Purpose Programs with campaigns for school-based curriculum development in the 1970s provided a climate in which experimentation and progressivism could flourish.

### **4.2 Enrolment Share**

The impact of stable funding on Catholic education enabled state authorities to plan for full coverage at all levels. Over time those Catholic students educated in government schools for their early years were able to begin in a Catholic school. This

movement is reflected in changes to enrolment share in the period 1975-1995.(Table 2)

**Table 2: Percentage share of school students by sector, 1975-1995**

	Government	Catholic	Anglican	Other Private	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
1975	78.7	17.0	1.7	2.5	100
1976	78.8	16.9	1.7	2.5	100
1977	78.9	16.8	1.7	2.6	100
1978	78.7	16.9	1.8	2.7	100
1979	78.2	17.2	1.8	2.8	100
1980	77.7	17.5	1.9	3.0	100
1981	77.0	17.9	1.9	3.2	100
1982	76.2	18.3	2.0	3.5	100
1983	75.6	18.5	2.1	3.7	100
1984	74.9	18.8	2.2	4.1	100
1985	74.2	19.1	2.3	4.4	100
1986	73.6	19.4	2.4	4.7	100
1987	73.1	19.5	2.5	4.9	100
1988	72.7	19.6	2.5	5.2	100
1989	72.4	19.6	2.6	5.4	100
1990	72.1	19.6	2.7	5.6	100
1991	72.1	19.5	2.7	5.7	100
1992	72.1	19.4	2.7	5.8	100
1993	71.9	19.3	2.7	6.0	100
1994	71.5	19.4	2.8	6.3	100
1995	71.0	19.5	2.9	6.6	100

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (Marginson 1997: 21)

Table 2 indicates a decline in enrolments in government schools from 78.7 per cent in 1975 to 71.0 in 1995, the period which the funding arrangements and values in *Schools in Australia* influenced education in Australia. The greatest growth in this period is in the 'Other Private' category from 2.5 to 6.6 per cent in the same twenty year period. The growth in the enrolment share of Catholic and Anglican schools was relatively modest. The 'Other Private' category is mostly other denominations, from Jewish to Christian Fundamentalist to Islamic. While the New Schools Policy of Labor Governments in the 1980s sought to contain growth the principle of diversity contained a logic that made it difficult to prevent it.

### 4.3 Family Income and School Choice

The conventional wisdom that non-government schools are for the wealthy is challenged by recent data from the 1996 Australian census.(Table 3)

**Table 3: Family status by annual income and type of school attended, 1996**

Annual Family Income	Govt School Only	Non-govt School Only	Mix	Total
<\$10,400	37,038	10,068	1,300	48,406
\$10,400-\$25,999	258,361	58,345	9,363	326,069
\$26,000- \$41,599	245,886	74,277	13,004	333,167
\$41,600-\$61-399	233,727	96,608	16,036	346,371
\$62,400-\$77,999	91,426	47,806	8,458	147,690
78,000-\$103,999	54,559	36,236	6,198	96,993
\$104,000+	43,245	45,359	7,674	96,278
Not stated etc	185,062	81,977	14,615	281,654
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,149,304</b>	<b>450,676</b>	<b>76,648</b>	<b>1,676,628</b>

(ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1996 in APC Review)

These figures indicate that nearly 20 per cent of families in the lowest income brackets (that is, earning less than \$26,000 per annum) send their children to non government schools. Of the 11 per cent of families with children at school, and an annual income of more than \$104,000, some 45 per cent use government schools only, 47 per cent use non government schools only and 8 per cent have children at both types of schools.

A *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial used this data to criticise the government and unions.

*It is worrying because it points to a vote of no confidence in some aspects of the practice, culture and administration of government schools. It is interesting because it suggests that parents increasingly accept that there is a market for schooling. Parents are no longer prepared to allow financial imperatives to force them to accept whatever the State Government and the NSW Teachers Federation decide to offer them. The state government, to its credit, understands what is happening. There is no evidence that the federation has grasped the significance of the change in parental attitudes.*  
(SMH, 2 May 1998, p.49)

The enrolment shift described above (4.2) and its impact across income categories is generally attributed to the influence of *Schools in Australia*. Undoubtedly, the provision of stable funding was critical to the future of comprehensive Catholic schooling. However, given their initial opposition to State Aid, it is likely that other non-government schools (generally high fee-paying) would have survived. The decision by the Fraser Government in 1976 to increase the funding share of non-government schools began the movement of the poorer schools toward the common



standard. Some authors lament this adjustment as a lost opportunity for government schools.

*While the Karmel grants improved the absolute material standards in government schools, and strengthened their function as the apparent site of equality of opportunity, those grants did not improve the relative social role and position of government schools. Not so the grants to private schools. The whole private sector was re-energised by the Karmel settlement, and elevated vis-à-vis the government sector. (Marginson 1997: 63)*

#### 4.4 Self-governing Schools

The Karmel values of devolution of responsibility and community involvement sought to limit central control of schools, stimulate greater parent involvement and promote links with other socialising agencies. Many state bureaucracies read this agenda, and the distribution of many SPP grants direct to schools, as an attack on their authority. The entrance of the Commonwealth as a major player in school education was taken as an encroachment on states' constitutional responsibility – they accepted the funding while opposing the influence. 'At best the direct effect seems to have been marginal.' (Angus 1995: 7)

In a move sometimes characterised as 'the tired left meeting the new right', the communitarian agenda of the Karmel Committee was overtaken by the economic rationalism of the late 1980s. Successive state departments of education planned to devolve administrative, financial and human resource functions to schools while retaining control over curriculum and accountability arrangements. These reforms were part of a broader public sector reform, and some aspects were congruent with the growing research into school effectiveness.

*Many of the maxims of public sector reform resonate with the school improvement movement. They share a focus on outcomes, a commitment to consumers (be they citizens or students) and a belief in locating decision-making close to those affected. (Pascoe and Pascoe 1998: 19)*

It is difficult to quantify the degree to which the moves to self-governing schools can be attributed to the influence of *Schools in Australia*. Certainly it questioned the traditional public service paradigm of central bureaucratic control and argued for greater local control. By legitimising non-government schools as part of mainstream provision, *Schools in Australia* ensured that educators were not presented with an alien concept. Some 30 per cent of students came to be educated in non-government schools with established site-based management practices. When state governments initiated moves to self-governing schools, the implementation issues related to resourcing, power-sharing and change-management, not feasibility.

## 5.0 POLICY ENVIRONMENT

### 5.1 The Nature of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools have a mandate to educate baptised Catholics. The Code of Canon Law spells out the obligations of Bishops in this regard.

*If there are no schools in which an education is provided that is imbued with a Christian spirit, the diocesan Bishop has the responsibility of ensuring that such schools are established.* (Canon 802:1)

Most diocesan authorities have enrolment policies that put a ceiling on the number of non-Catholics that can be enrolled. The Archdiocese of Melbourne policy sets a ceiling of 7 per cent. The proportion of Catholic students enrolled in government schools is currently 17% per cent, prompting concerns that there may be barriers to access such as fees, geographic location and so on.

The mission of the Catholic school is to educate the whole person. The school environment and interpersonal relations should be imbued with Christian values such as integrity, compassion, hope and love. Staff are expected to model Christian behaviours and the curriculum and school organisation should provide opportunities for formal religious instruction and the transmission of faith in a religious environment. In keeping with the spirit of Vatican II, Catholic schools are expected to be part of the broader community and to contribute to the social fabric by inculcating civic behaviours.

*A Christian education must promote respect for the state and its representatives, the observance of just laws and the search for the common good. Therefore traditional civic values such as freedom, justice and nobility of work and the need to pursue social progress are all included among the schools goals and the life of the school gives witness to them.* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1993)

This paper will not describe the nature and scope of other non-government schools. They are by definition independent and there is a variety of denominations and belief systems in their number.

### 5.2 Changing Conceptions of Public and Private

Even a cursory glance of the literature on 'public' and 'private' schooling in Australia indicates a confusion of terminology and intent. Authors slip between using 'private' to mean elite independent schools only **and** all non-government schools. (Anderson 1993; Harrison 1996; Marginson 1997) 'Public' schools are generally understood to be those which are fully state funded and controlled. However, the substantial levels of public funding offered to non-government schools and their increasing accountability means that this distinction is also questionable. Can we describe as private an enterprise which is partially funded from the public purse? I would argue that it is more helpful to talk of government and non-government (operated) schools than 'public' and 'private', and it is more accurate to talk of a triadic system of schooling (government, Catholic and independent) than a dual system.

Conceptions of public and private have been changing as governments embraced the new right agenda of increased market influences in public services, accepted a distinction between 'steering' and 'rowing' the ship of state,<sup>12</sup> and applied a consequent separation between the provision and the purchasing of government services. Within government education services that were traditionally provided by the state, such as cleaning and maintenance, are now contracted out; parents are encouraged to exercise choice of schooling; financial, administrative and human resources are managed locally, and more information is provided to the public. The old dualisms no longer serve us well.

*For as long as anyone cares to remember, we have been mired in a debate over the allocation of resources between the so-called private and public sectors. Whether it is capitalism versus communism, privatisation versus nationalisation, or the markets of business versus the controls of government, the arguments have always pitted independent forces against public, collective ones. It is time we recognised how limited the dichotomy really is.* (Mintzberg 1996: 76)

There is every evidence that Catholic and independent schools share with their government school counterparts a commitment to educating young Australians for civic life,<sup>13</sup> that they are accountable at all levels (Pascoe 1998), and that they are both self-regulated and externally regulated. The shared commitment of all sectors of schooling to all Australian children should be recognised.

*The old liberal dualisms of public/private and state/market, which were never a very good analytical guide, have been rendered obsolete by the changing role of government, with its greater capacity to work across state and non-state boundaries...The preferred notion of 'public education' is that it contributes to open and democratic public relations; is tolerant and inclusive; respects differences; and is associated with egalitarian practices in which the mode of learning is solidaristic rather than competitive, and the education of one is advanced by the education of all to the highest possible level of achievement. 'Public education' in this sense can be achieved in both state and non-state institutions.* (Marginson 1998: 69)

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission had a deep and enduring impact on education in Australia. It signalled the entrance of the Commonwealth as a major player in school education, it articulated values that struck a chord with the educational and broader community, and it identified areas where it wanted to achieve measurable improvement. The provision of stable funding for non-

<sup>12</sup> Osborne, David and Gaebler, Ted (1993) *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (Plume Books, New York).

<sup>13</sup> In their investigations the Civics Expert Group found high levels of support for civics education in non-government schools and relatively high levels of practice (mindful that formal civics teaching was not prevalent in any sector).

government schools enabled Catholic schools to move beyond considerations of survival to issues of quality provision. All teachers and schools had the opportunity to benefit from funding for innovative practice and professional renewal.

By placing the concept of need at the heart of its funding approach the Committee appealed to Australian qualities of fairness and egalitarianism and deftly sidestepped the State Aid issue. While it is difficult to quantify the impact of the Karmel agenda on Australian education it is possible to trace continuities, from its argument for devolution of responsibility to later moves to self governing schools, from its acceptance of diversity and public and private schooling to later emphases on choice of schooling and from its commitment to equality to ongoing efforts to improve the educational outcomes of the underprivileged and those with special needs. It is possible to detect other influences on Australian education during the same period, notably the campaign in the 1970s for school-based curriculum development, changes to public sector management and the delivery of public services from the late 1980s, and the impact of research into school improvement on professional practice. The report of the Quality in Education Review Committee<sup>14</sup> prompted a move to an outcomes orientation and the reformist Commonwealth education minister, John Dawkins, drove change at all levels of education in the period 1987-91. Undoubtedly the interplay of these factors on the Karmel landscape combined to produce the reform-oriented culture in Australian education today.

The election of a Federal Coalition government in March 1996 spelled the end to aspects of the Karmel era. The forty Specific Purpose Programs of the former Labor government were collapsed into five broad areas: Literacy, Languages, Special Learning Needs, School to Work and Quality Outcomes. The New Schools Policy which regulated the entrance of new schools was abolished and an Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment was introduced to provide the Commonwealth with a share of the savings from enrolment movements from government to non-government schools. Australia's most senior educator has argued for a level playing field for all sectors of schooling and for a renewal of practice in government schools.(Boston 1997)

An enduring policy stance from the Karmel era is the ongoing bipartisan commitment to needs-based funding approaches and to resourcing all schools to the 'common standard.' We are reminded of Karmel values and the need for all of us involved in Australian education to place students at the heart of our enterprise. Professional collaboration will ensure that all students have equal access to a high quality education and that the outcomes of our endeavours are reflected across the socio-economic, cultural and geographic spectrum.

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## **The Role Of The Teacher: Teachers' Work And Professional Development**

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### **Introduction**

In 1973 the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission reported to the Commonwealth Government, on ways to improve the quality of primary and secondary schooling. The Committee emphasised the importance of teacher inservice education in the renewal of Australian schooling and its recommendations were subsequently taken up by the School Commission's in its teacher development program. The aims of that program included:

1. to expand teachers' professional consciousness of whose interests they served and the consequences for their students;
2. to increase teachers' confidence in, and sense of worth of, their own knowledge and practice;
3. to improve their capacity to better match learning experiences to student needs and interests; and
4. to develop unity and collegiality across the schooling sectors.

Subsequent national, state and territory inquiries and reports on education and teacher education extended the work of the Interim Committee (eg Auchmuty 1980, Boomer 1988). However, over the past 25 years the Karmel Report has continued to influence teacher professional development in Australia.

This paper identifies some of the major changes in teachers' work and professional development over that period. It begins by briefly revisiting the teachers' world of work and inservice education in the 1970s then outlines some of the conditions influencing teachers' work today and current issues in teacher professional development. Following the emphasis given to inservice education in the Karmel Report, the paper concentrates on continuing teacher professional development although many of the issues raised equally apply to initial teacher education.

The paper asserts that the relationship between teachers' work and teachers' professional development is both symbiotic and synergistic. They are symbiotic to the extent that teachers' work informs their learning and vice versa. They are synergistic to the extent that one catalyses and stimulates the other. A major problem in this relationship is that teachers' work is not only a 'labour process without an object' (Connell 1985, 70), but also 'there is no *logical* limit to the expansion of an individual teacher's work' (p72). However, professional work is restricted to the provision of a particular, sharply defined which is informed by a recognised code of ethics and meets legally and socially accepted standards of performance. One requisite therefore for the teaching profession to develop further, is a clearer demarcation of its particular and unique expertise. The paper argues one way to achieve this is to develop a better understanding of teachers' work and their theories of their work.

### **Being a teacher in the 1970s and 1990s**

This section consists of four reminiscences of teachers.. Taken together they recall some of the issues and concerns of teachers in the 1960s and 1970s such as the conditions of employment, particularly of women, class size, quality assurance, the curriculum, and teaching methods.

***Vignette 1 M. Maher began teaching in the late 1950's***

*When I began teaching I was advantaged by being a male. Female teachers earned only a proportion of the male wage, a situation that did not change for many years. If women teachers married, they had to resign, and could only be re-employed by contract, which ended in the Christmas holidays. This situation continued until the early 1970s....Staffing patterns were interesting. Women almost inevitably took the junior grades (grades 1 and 2) while the senior classes (grades 6, 7 and 8) were usually the bastion of the male teachers. A few female teachers were found in these areas, and generally they were outstanding teachers.*

*Maher July 1998 The forgotten army. The professional Exchange Teachers talking to Teachers Issue 20, 1-2*

***Vignette 2 K. Cox also began teaching in the 1950s***

*Class sizes were large in some schools. In 1958, I taught 72 Year 7s in the State system and in 1963 76 Year 7s in the private system.*

*Transfers were accepted as part of the job. You could be called into the headmaster's office to be handed a brown envelope. Inside it were the details of where you had to go, when you had to be there and other travel documents. On one occasion, I was informed at morning tea on the Friday that I had to be in another town to start on the following Monday....*

*Some items I remember are:*

- *Weekly Friday tests;*
- *Surprise visits from the Head;*
- *All children doing the same level of work in all subjects;*
- *Weekly composition on a set topic;*
- *Children being required to calculate the cost of wallpapering a room with certain sized rolls of paper at so much per roll, cost of laying tiles and line, etc;*
- *Corporal punishment and the punishment register;....*

*Cox, K. Still going strong. The professional Exchange Teachers talking to Teachers Issue 20, 2-3*

***Vignette 3 C. Ivins began teaching in the 1960s***

*The child (student) was in a submissive role and any prior experiences they had were considered of little worth as a resource for learning. Motivation then was through external agents – grades, teacher's approval (or disapproval) and parental or societal pressure.*

*This was also an era of change for classroom dynamics with the inclusion of parents in the classroom (as helpers) – and for some experienced teachers this move was quite threatening. They sensed a loss power and control: keeping parents out of the classroom, as some chose to do (and still do), kept parents ignorant...and this meant continued 'power'.*

*C. Ivins The Professional Exchange: Teachers Talking to Teachers Issue 20, 3-4 1998*



**Vignette 4 S Frank began teaching in the late 1960s**

*Fresh with my degree and teachers certificate I rolled up at my first school to be told I was to teach year 8 and 9 science, junior school maths, an English class and I was expected to coach the C cricket team. Teaching science was doing the experiments which the students wrote up in their prac books. Maths was the classic chalk and talk. I taught what was laid out by the subject master who also set the tests. If students failed it was their fault or their parents' or last year's teacher's. Teaching wasn't too bad. I knew what I had to do and how to get promotion. Once I'd served my apprenticeship I got reasonable classes. I did most of my work at school in frees and a bit of time each afternoon. I always felt sorry and still do for the English teachers over the amount of marking..*

Private correspondence 1998

Certainly the conditions of teaching have changed over the past 25 years or so but the concerns continue – students, colleagues, preparation, teaching, testing, marking. Now let's look at the professional development available in the 1970s.

**Professional development prior to Karmel**

Prior to the early 1970s employer provided teacher education was parochial, instrumentalist, behaviourist and minimalist. Employing authorities limited participation to teachers from their own system or sector. The principal purpose was to promote high fidelity adoption of central initiatives. Program design followed the deficit model in which "the expert", usually a non-practising teacher, told, with the emphasis on told, practising teachers how to improve their teaching. Courses were short term, in school time and with little or no structured or on-demand support provided.

Professional and subject associations provided independent activities and teachers a voice in their own professional development. However, membership was not high, especially amongst primary teachers. The unions restricted their offerings to industrial concerns. The universities provided an autonomous, if mainly theoretical option, and employing authorities generally subsidised further study.

Most significantly, professional development was not part of the teacher culture. For the vast majority of teachers formal study stopped at graduation when 'the real learning' began. Further the most effective and persistent influence shaping teacher thinking and practice, the day to day experience of living and working in schools, classrooms and offices received no formal attention. The professional learning from teaching, talking with colleagues, parents and students, from discussions in bars, boutiques and at barbecues didn't count as teacher development in the academic or bureaucratic consciousness of the day. Teachers, however, recognised these experiences as the main ways they learnt how to teach and to keep up to date. The result of largely ignoring the working knowledge of teachers by academics and many employer inservice providers, was two distinctive bodies of knowledge about teaching, coexisted in a state mutual disrespect bordering on hostility. One was founded on the application of generic theories typically those drawn from psychology. The other was based in teachers' thinking about their work. And it was almost a case of never the twain shall meet. This unfortunate situation had, and in some cases continues to have, a detrimental effect on the development of the profession as well as on the effectiveness of its professional development.

### Professional development in the 1990s

Even a cursory acquaintance with current teacher development indicates a significant shift in thinking and practice post Karmel. Most significantly, the psyche of Australian teachers about their professional development has changed. Karmel and the Schools Commission were the first authorities to demonstrate confidence in the worth of teachers' practical knowledge and to have faith in their professional expertise to make significant decisions about their own and their students' learning was guaranteed. Their actions prompted employing authorities to assign a higher priority to continuing teacher development and to ameliorate sectorial parochialism. The organisation and delivery of courses and activities have increasingly incorporated adult learning theory and best current practice in their design and processes and design. Now the worth of teachers' knowledge is recognised and respected in award and non-award programs. The relationship between their thinking and acting in their particular, personal contexts is a common focus.

There are then marked differences between the 1970s and 1990s, particularly in term of what counts as professional development. Now the general understanding is that professional development embraces all

*the planned experiences which a qualified teacher may undergo for the purposes of extending his professional competence and other approaches which move outwards from the teacher's own experience and are based on his own developing conception of what it might mean to be a competent practitioner* (Karmel 1973; 119-120).

accepts 'there is no single pattern to which good teachers conform' (Karmel 1973, 120) and the objective

*is to help the teacher become progressively more sensitive to what is happening in his classroom and to support his efforts to improve, assisted by theoretical studies arising from his needs as he perceives it.* (Karmel 1973, 120)

This is far removed from the narrow concept of inservice education prior to the mid 1970s.

There are however significant continuities between now and earlier periods. Employers remain the major providers and the achievement of high fidelity to centrally driven policy and frameworks remains a major purpose of employer sponsored programs. Such programs marginalise teachers from the processes of deliberation and knowledge production, encourage technological approaches to teaching (Giroux 1988), and inservice education as teacher knowledge control (Sachs and Logan 1990). The profession itself has shown little proactive behaviour and independence to direct its own professional development. Unions retain a predominantly industrial focus, leaving the professional associations to carry the responsibility for promoting teacher controlled professional development.

The developments are presented schematically in the following display.

		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Policy	Social Maintenance					
	Social Change					
	Economic Renewal					
Focus	Curriculum Content					
	Technology of Teaching					
	Reflective Practice					
Culture	Individual					
	Pseudo-collaborative					
	Collaborative					
Orientation	Solution Giving					
	Problem Solving					
	Problem Understanding					
	Problematising					
Scope	Generalised					
	Contextualised					
	Particularised					
Delivery	Expert					
	Workshop					
	Consultative					
	Collegial					
Providers	Higher Education					
	Employing Authority					
	Associations					
	Private Providers					
Evaluation	Providers Satisfaction					
	Teacher Satisfaction					
	Outcomes Based					
Rewards/Incentives	University Degrees					
	Recognition					
	Certification (Attendance)					
Administration	Centralised					
	Decentralised					
	Localised					

Display: Developments in professional development since the 1960s

The display recognises the technological advances that have occurred in terms of design and delivery. However, it also raises questions about the degree to which professional development is professional as distinct from instrumental, it encourages diversity rather than conformity, and the degree to which the profession is prepared to take responsibility for its own development. These issues are explored below.

## Current issues

The major issues facing teacher professional development revolve around the impact on schooling of societal change. Such generate uncertainty, challenge, demand and opportunity for teachers to identify more clearly their professional expertise, ethics, standards and student working conditions required for quality schooling.

## *Societal change*

To say teachers have had to respond to social, cultural and economic change continually in post World War 2 Australia is to state no more than the obvious. However, up to the past decade the changes were oriented to the maintenance of the modern western welfare state. Now, through developments such as the internationalisation of the economy and culture under the influence of the communication revolution, a radically different state is emerging through the process of what Mackay (1993) refers to as reinventing Australia. Features of this reinvention include:

- public sector privatisation;
- massive upheavals in the work force;
- alternative forms of community, gender and authority relations;
- abandonment of the assumption of every person's right to a secure place in the society;
- lower government control over the national economy;
- national culture as a multicultural identity heavily influenced by international images;
- the media as the primary social integrative force;
- citizens constituted as consumers; and
- the image revolution bringing politics and government into disrepute.

(Hinkson 1991, 15-24).

Such developments generate dilemmas for the school teaching profession. On the one hand, they call for major revisions to how schools are conceptualised, what constitutes teachers' work, and what are best practices. In short, integral to inventing postmodern Australia is the renewal of its schooling system and teaching profession. On the other hand, the exponents of economic rationalism call for schooling to attend to traditional purposes - literacy, numeracy, obedience, vocational preparation (albeit dressed in IT images). Also, they have increased the effectiveness of centralised control over government sector schooling through the implementation of corporate managerialist structures, operating principles and processes to implement their policies.

Teachers are required daily to work through the dilemmas emanating from these social policy tensions and contradictions. Whose interests should they be serving and how in a period of major social, cultural and economic transformation? The dilemma manifests in various forms as teachers grapple with the consequences of

- the influence of political agendas of the government of the day on the curriculum.
- the impact of public service reforms on conditions of employment, career structures and forms of accountability, which produce opportunity, challenge, uncertainty, disillusionment and in some cases termination.
- the implementation of corporate management structures and procedures on schools and school systems with the emphasis on measurable outcomes and private enterprise approaches generates tensions and contradictions over issues of professional freedom, authority, responsibility and accountability.
- the need to generate income, managing resources and meeting accountability requirements without the necessary support staff.

- the intensification of the teacher's day occasioned by developments such as localisation of school management, involvement in curriculum development, engagement on teams, membership of working parties, and increased demands for testing, and recording planning, outcomes and individual performance for accountability purposes.
- the incremental incursion of the teachers working day and working week into their private lives in order for them to teach effectively and fulfil accountability requirements.
- legal responsibility in an increasingly litigious society.
- system-wide testing of students and quality assurance measures.
- centrally driven curriculum, administrative and restructuring initiatives.
- the current morale of teachers which ranges from professional pride, confidence and satisfaction to alienation, frustration and weariness.

As stated above, within this complex context teachers are faced with the major tasks of identifying the particular role and expertise of school teaching, and accepting the limits of their professional responsibility. That is learning when and how to say yes we can and no we can't. Achieving these tasks is a primary challenge for the profession, and its development.

### *Teachers' professional expertise*

A discussion of 'professional development' presumably is based on an agreed meaning of professional action, the domain of the profession, and the meaning of development. Professional action here is taken to be that action informed by a body of expertise and an ethical code which transcends common sense judgments and actions.

Traditionally teaching and the professional expertise of schoolteachers have been directly linked to services provided by schools rather than a knowledge or skill base. Originally that service was mainly concerned with fairly narrowly conceived forms of intellectual, skill and moral development. However, during the past 25 years the services have been extended resulting in a corresponding extension of the teachers' work irrespective of the appropriateness of their professional knowledge and skill. Further more the profession has been too weak theoretically to resist the continued extension by employing authorities of the teachers' responsibility under the guise of professionalism. The weaknesses are due in part to the long-term neglect of academics and practitioners alike to document the work that constitutes school teaching and to explicate the thinking that informs this work. One way to redress this neglect is to study schooling with a view to improving the capacity to understand and explain the particulars that make up schooling rather than seeking to apply theories derived mainly from psychology, sociology and commerce to predict and control a hypothetical generic form of school teaching. This necessitates explicating for critical comment and analysis the work, thinking and conditions that structure the work and thinking of school teachers.

### *Explicating teacher expertise*

How teachers develop their idiosyncratic forms of thinking which informs their work is central to the practice and theory of initial and continuing teacher education. Recent work has begun to clarify some of the questions about teacher knowledge and theorising, to raise others and to question some 'truisms'. Currently, teacher thinking and behaviour is foregrounded in the process, research and scholarship of professional development. This is principally due to the emphasis given to action research and reflection by people such as Schon (1983), Elliot (1992), Calderhead (1987), and Smyth (1992); the promotion of school and classroom located professional development; and, the formal recognition of the worth of teachers sharing their experiences and expertise.

Research indicates that teacher knowledge is complex; particularistic rather than generic, intuitive, developed through interaction between theory and practice, and becomes extant through the teacher's responses to specific, diverse, often contradictory, demands and priorities (Elbaz 1983). Moreover, the teacher's knowledge is continually shaped by and shapes the teacher's practice and context (Elbaz 1983). It is constantly redefined and modified according to the changing demands. Intuitive, tacit and analytic forms of knowledge are employed as required by the context. In a sense teacher knowledge is always hypothetical and in a state of uncertainty. Carr and Kemmis construe the relationship between teacher theory and teacher practice as follows.

*...those engaged in educational practices are already committed to some elaborate, if not explicit, set of beliefs about what they are doing, they already possess some theoretical framework that serves both to explain and direct their practices. Moreover, these expectations change, in response to practical situations in which the practitioners find themselves; that is, the beliefs that constitute their 'theoretical frameworks' are situationally embedded and shaped by particular histories of interactions in situations like and unlike the ones in which they find themselves.*

Carr and Kemmis 1986, 111

The need to build theories of teaching through rigorously documenting teachers' practice and knowledge is now accepted (Clandinin 1985). However, the tacit component of teachers' knowledge complicates the documentation processes and thereby to understanding its structure and development (Elliott 1989). Furthermore, understanding teachers' knowledge and practice requires attending to their expectations, intentions, hopes and dreams (Louden 1991). This in turn necessitates broadening the focus of professional education beyond teachers' practice to teachers' lives (Goodson 1992) and implies including moral concerns alongside matters of purposes, content and competencies.

Research illuminates many features of teacher knowledge and the relationship between their thinking and acting. Also it tends to present teaching as an individual activity, to assume that schools are conducive to reflective practice and to downplay the moral aspects of the profession. These findings have direct implications for professional development.

1. Given the changes, extant and likely, in Australian society, the focus on current practice and thinking needs to be supplemented by a futuristic, critical dimension that asks teachers to address questions about (a) whose interests their current practice serves, how and why, and who it neglects or disadvantages; (b) their role in shaping and implementing future schooling; and (c) the nature of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required by teachers in the coming decade.
2. While a significant proportion of teaching remains private, individual and exclusive, many teachers are confident enough to make their teaching and thinking public to other teachers. One task of professional development is to strengthen and extend this trust and to engender a sense of inclusivity amongst the various constituent groups of the teaching profession - teachers, administrators, teacher educators. Such inclusivity and professional community building provides the basis to celebrate and utilise the profession's diversity in improving the theory and practice of teaching. Tripp (1993) through the use of critical incidents and Ingvarson (see Ingvarson and Marett 1997) using case studies are two teacher educators who have demonstrated the mutual benefit to teachers, academics and students of working in professional communities. Features of such communities include reflective dialogue, de-privatisation of practice, collective focus on student learning, collaboration, and shared norms and values (Kruse, Lois and Bryk cited in Ingvarson 1997, 236). Some schools and sections of schools exhibit these features within their own site, however, instances involving academics and/or other "outsiders" is less common. Whether by building professional communities or by some other

means, the teaching profession's future is linked with it developing internal inclusivity amongst the membership.

3. Research shows the high cognitive complexity of teacher knowledge, the intense intellectual demand of teaching activity, the worth of reflection or thinking time, and the value of colleague discussion. However, schools generally are not reflective, contemplative settings but intense, stressful sites. In order to capitalise on the opportunities schools offer for teacher learning requires major revisions of teachers' working conditions and terms of employment.
4. Teaching essentially is a moral act. Matters of professional morals and values raise the need for the profession itself to take the responsibility for its own future and develop and enforce a charter for teaching (Schools Council 1990), national teaching standards, and compulsory professional registration (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee 1998). The option is to continue to allow conditions for entry, the conditions of work, and the conditions for judging performance, to be the prerogative of the government or agencies that are non-accountable to the profession.

Establishing the theoretical and practical basis of teaching, it has been asserted, is basic to identifying the domain of teacher expertise and to identifying the role of the teacher within the catalogue of services delivered through schools. It has been claimed this is a requisite for providing the quality of teacher education, both initial and inservice, required if teachers are going to both shape their own role and the contribution of schools in the renewal of Australia. One feature of the emerging profession might be greater collegiality and inclusivity of all its practitioners, university, school, and system people alike, who are engaged in schooling. This assumes that teaching is not only a profession but also offers a career.

### **Careers**

Ten years ago Boomer in a national report on inservice education entitled *Teachers Learning* wrote

*The career path of teachers, compared with conditions a decade ago, is leading to a bottleneck as promotion opportunities diminish. Traditionally, the career path for teachers to senior positions has led away from teaching. Now, these teachers face the prospect of blocked promotion paths and must look to gaining satisfaction and reward from remaining as classroom teachers.*

(Boomer 1988, 6)

The statement draws attention to two problems that continue to face the profession. One is the limited career paths within teaching open to most teachers. The second is the problem of career rewards for classroom teachers. Various models linking career stages with duties and responsibilities, standards with expertise, and rewards and evaluation with performance are available (eg Ingvarson and Chadbourne 1994, Schools Council 1990). However, teaching remains for the majority of teachers 'a powerless and careerless profession' according to (Ingvarson and Chadbourne (1994, 17). Their suggested ways to improve the career structure within teaching include

- deriving standards from a knowledge base not a job description,
- salary systems based on career development not merit pay or career ladders,
- parity of careers in teaching and administration, and
- the teachers taking primary responsibility for control over the recruitment, selection, initial training, certification, registration, appraisal, disciplining and continuing development of their profession.

One might add greater permeability of positions and sectors to facilitate movement within and across sectors, positions and institutions.

The exploration of possibilities of career structures and their realisation rests in part in the profession adopting an inclusive approach involving teachers, employers, academics and unions jointly working through the issues and prosecuting the case for major reform. Unfortunately, no association comes readily to mind, with the possible exception of The Australian College of Education, which has sufficient respect and is representative enough to take carriage of the task. School teaching remains a divided profession and its unification a major priority for the various parties to address.

### Conclusion

This paper has maintained that the primary challenges facing teacher professional development are predominantly theoretical and ethical and the solutions lie in understanding the thinking and practice of everyone directly involved with school teaching – teachers, administrators, academics.

The implications for school teaching of the use of technology, school governance, the development of specialists, the preparation and training of school administrators, the role of higher education institutions, the contribution of professional associations, program design and delivery, the vexed matter of evaluation, issues relating to formal award credit, the recognition of prior learning; study leave, school climate for professional learning, curriculum change and professional development, recognition of awards and course attendance, the relationship to appraisal, the pressing issue of recruitment and retention, the concern over teachers' content mastery, community involvement, vocational education, teaching of literacy, numeracy, citizenship, science, behaviour management, and so on have been ignored. These are, of course, central to the work of school teachers and are at the same time the content of their professional education curriculum. Maximising the potential for symbiosis and synergy between work and learning to strengthen the theoretical understandings and practice of school teaching is the major task facing professional development. The quality of teachers' work is inextricably linked to the quality of their learning.

Twenty-five years ago the Karmel Report laid a foundation which reformed the inservice education of the day in the light of the societal requirements of teaching. This conference recognises and celebrates that effort and those who turned its ideas and aspirations into reality. The challenge now is to take the next leap in renewing teaching as part of the current renewal of Australia. Some task, but so was the one facing teachers in 1973.



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# CONSTRUCTING A NATIONAL VOICE FOR THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM - REFLECTIONS ON THE COMMONWEALTH'S INTEREST IN CURRICULUM POLICY AND PRACTICE

Kerry J Kennedy

## Introduction

Curriculum and pedagogy have not been central interests for the Commonwealth but they have been important. Pre-dating the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre there was the Australian Science Education Project (ASEP) which was Australia's answer to the Sputnik scare that had initiated so much mathematics and science curriculum development in the United States. As Assistant Director of the reactivated Curriculum Development Centre I developed an interest in the ASEP materials that were still being sold and thus being used in Australian classrooms in the mid 1980s. They always seemed to me to be a link to Australia's curriculum history and each time I received a sales report, I determined that CDC should follow up the buyers of these materials to see why they were still being used and how they were being integrated into current curriculum a decade and a half after their development. Such arcane interests, however, were not always appreciated in a bureaucratic context (this was my most significant learning about working for the Commonwealth - my interests and its interests did not always coincide. It was a painful learning process at times). Nevertheless, there was a tangible link between this first foray of the Commonwealth into the curriculum realm and ongoing developments over many years. It is this thread of interest in the school curriculum on the part of the Commonwealth that will be the focus of this paper - it is a thread that can be traced at least to the late 1960s and which continues today.

How can we account for over thirty years of interest? Just how important was the school curriculum to the Commonwealth and its statutory bodies such as the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre? These are the questions I would like to explore in this paper I would like to offer some answers based simply on my own experience, so what follows is more like reflections on five years of participation rather than detailed empirical research, I would like to suggest a broad theoretical framework in which these explanations can be best understood, offer some explanations for teachers' reactions to national directions and conclude with a view about the future for curriculum in this country.

This is an ambitious agenda on an important occasion. While it might seem that history has brought us to where we are today this is not the point I want to make. Rather, I want us to understand some of the vision that drove the Schools Commission and Curriculum Development Centre. This vision has been supplanted today by a new credo that finds its rationale in economic development, ever expanding growth, emphasis on output and in a consequent devaluing of the human spirit. The need to recapture our humanity and our spirit is, in my view, the great need of our time. This paper is dedicated to that cause.

## The School Curriculum and its Policy Contexts

In a recent publication (Brady and Kennedy, 1999), I built on Christie (1985) and outlined what I saw to be the phases of the Commonwealth's interest in the school curriculum. I have now added to this:

**Table 1: Stages of the Commonwealth Government's Attempts to Influence the School Curriculum**

Stage 1 : The Committee Stage - 1970-1973	National curriculum committees used to coordinate State/Territory and Commonwealth activities
Stage 2: Curriculum Development Centre, 1973-1981	Established as a Commonwealth statutory body to further the Commonwealth's curriculum policy objective but wound down with the curriculum function moving into the Department of Education.
Stage 3 : Curriculum Development Centre reactivated, 1983-1989	A new government reestablishes CDC as a unit within the Commonwealth Schools Commission
Stage 4: CDC becomes a unit within the Schools and Curriculum Division of the newly created Department of Employment Education and Training. 1987-1989	Curriculum policy becomes a mainstream concern of a major Commonwealth department and policy objectives are pursued directly by the Department.
Stage 5: CDC is abolished and the Curriculum Corporation is established as a wholly owned company of State/Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education. <sup>1</sup> - 1989	The Commonwealth joins with the States/Territories to pursue its curriculum policy objectives.
Stage 6 : Intergovernmental mechanisms take centre stage for the development of national curriculum initiatives 1987-current	Ministerial Councils become the main forum for the Commonwealth to secure its curriculum policy objectives under both Labor and Coalition governments.

The emphasis here is on the Curriculum Development Centre and specific curriculum policy initiatives because this has been the focus of my own work for over a decade. Yet it is also true that many of the major initiatives of the Schools Commission had significant curriculum dimensions. There have been very few attempts to bring the work of the two agencies together to provide any comprehensive analysis. What follows is an attempt to identify some common trends.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Initially, New South Wales did not participate in the Curriculum Corporation but eventually it joined the other States/Territories.

<sup>2</sup> What follows is based on my 1993 chapter, "National curriculum policy development in Australia : A review and analysis of Commonwealth government involvement in the school curriculum" In K. Kennedy, O Watts and G. McDonald. *Citizenship Education for a New Age*. Toowoomba: University of Southern Queensland Press, 7-18. It has been considerably

The first phase of CDC's activities has been described by Macpherson (1990, p.3) as one in which the agency was a 'major vehicle for curriculum reform and School Based Curriculum Development'. He identified links with 'the radical social philosophy of the Whitlam administration' and the reformist policies of the Commonwealth Schools Commission. Yet by 1980, the publication of *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* seemed to signal a different trend - towards commonality in the curriculum rather the encouragement of local decision making and diversity.

This new direction was signalled by the foundation Director of CDC :

The Centre is now moving to a more integrated and holistic approach in its triennial program in an effort to use limited resources more effectively.

It is moving away from small, specific areas which can frequently be undertaken better by other bodies at both State and Federal levels and directing its resources to major and significant thrusts such as the development of a core curriculum and national projects in science, mathematics, language, the arts and social education. (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980, p.vi)

This view was re-echoed by David Francis, Skilbeck's successor:

Its (i.e. CDC's) role will become focused increasingly in what might be termed matters of national significance. These include its program in school-based curriculum development and core curriculum, needs and priorities in relation to major national initiatives, such as multiculturalism and the educational requirements of work and leisure, and more broadly the nation building role in which schools have a significant if often poorly defined part to play. (Curriculum Development Centre 1981, p.viii)

By comparison, the Schools Commission's interest in the curriculum was not as explicit as CDC's. Large scale funding programs such as the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Innovations Program and the Multicultural Education Program had fundamental curriculum intentions but these were carried out at the local level and filtered through State/Territory bureaucracies. CDC did curriculum development : the Schools Commission funded curriculum development and remained at a distance from the action. Both bodies had a significant commitment to curriculum change and reform but had different *modus operandi*, at least in the early stages. Different legislative bases, State/Territory and Commonwealth relationships and a constitutional context that gave the Commonwealth funds but not jurisdiction over the school curriculum dictated these differences.

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expanded to include the work of the Schools Commission and a perspective that highlights differing theoretical perspectives and a perspective that highlights differing theoretical perspectives.

By the late 1970's the economic crisis that was becoming evident on an international scale was starting to have its effect on statutory bodies like the Commission and CDC. For the latter, a Review of Commonwealth Functions (RCF) decided that the curriculum function was superfluous in the current context and the decision was taken to wind down CDC. It is ironic that this happened just at CDC was about to make what was arguably its most significant contribution to curriculum debate in Australia - the release of *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980). Had that document been followed up in a systematic way it clearly had the potential to reshape CDC's entire work program and focus effort on the mainstream curriculum of Australian schools. This was a new direction that could have seen a concentration of effort on major curriculum concerns and may well have provided a new role for the Commonwealth. Yet the RCF funding decision called an abrupt halt to what might have been a promising future for CDC - a future that was possibly being foreshadowed in the comments of Skilbeck and Francis referred to above.

For the Commission, there was a different response - a new funding program called the Transition Education Program (TEP). This was recognition that the world of work was becoming problematic as evidenced by the skyrocketing youth unemployment rate. The policy response was to seek to change the school curriculum to ensure that it equipped students with work related skills - never mind that there were no jobs for young people irrespective of their skills. In this, the Commission was, for the first time, conscripted to a nascent instrumentalism in relation to the school curriculum. CDC was not exempt from this, but the TEP signalled a new phase in Commonwealth curriculum policy - it was a phase driven by economic needs rather than educational rationale. This became a familiar theme throughout the 1980s.

CDC's demise was short-lived and in any case it continued to exist as a shell in the Commonwealth Department of Education between 1981 and 1983. At that time, the newly elected Hawke government reactivated it. In this incarnation, it was not a statutory body (although that option was canvassed) but as a Division of the Commonwealth Schools Commission with its own statutory governing body, the Curriculum Development Council. The refocussing of effort suggested by Skilbeck and Francis in the early 1980's was taken up by the reactivated CDC - an initiative of Six major program areas were initially identified for national curriculum development in addition to its publications program:

- Educational policies of the Commonwealth Government
- Fundamental areas of knowledge
- Initiatives supporting national cohesion
- Educational policies of the States and Territories
- Research related to curriculum development and education
- Collection and dissemination of curriculum information
- (Curriculum Development Centre, 1985):

It is not clear just how these 'program priority areas' dictated activities as part of CDC's operations but during 1985, the first full year of the reactivated CDC, 'twelve projects were completed and a further 15 were commenced' (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1986). In its recommendations to the Minister for 1986/1987 twelve

new major program areas were identified and these were much more curriculum specific:

- Language and learning
- Mathematics
- Science
- Curriculum and Technology
- Aboriginal Education
- Australian Studies
- Education and the Arts
- Languages other than English
- National Curriculum Information Sharing
- Curriculum and the World of Work
- National Curriculum Issues (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1986, p.37)

These remained priorities until abolition of the reactivated CDC in July 1989. Yet in addition to this concentration of effort, there was also a discernible change in the policy directions being pursued by the Curriculum Development Centre Council. In its *1985 Report to the Minister* (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1986) it highlighted the need for basic skills, the relationships between schooling and work, the challenges of science and technology, the need to promote an Australian cultural identity and the role of languages other than English as a national economic resource. This was part of a new curriculum and educational agenda being pursued by the Commonwealth - economically oriented and more instrumental in nature. At this stage, however, the instrumental rhetoric is still couched in vaguely progressivist terms although at times the instrumentalism is unmistakable as the following extract indicates:

The lack of a significant pool of highly trained linguists has the potential to affect Australian trading relationships and the level at which Australia is able to operate in the international arena. The ability to communicate in two or three languages is a valuable national asset that should be developed. (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1986, p.9).

This represents a not so subtle shift from the progressivist days of the earlier CDC and clearly points forward to the kind of instrumentalism that has dominated Commonwealth curriculum policy from the end of 1987 to the present time. Yet the important point to note is that such views were very much part of the Curriculum Development Centre Council's thinking towards the end of 1985. Instrumental thinking in educational policy development did not suddenly appear with the third Hawke government. Its roots were in the policies that were pursued by Senator Susan Ryan while she was the Commonwealth Minister for Education and before her, the Liberal, Senator Carrick, although it has to be said that it was a much paler version of instrumentalism than that adopted by her successor.

In the Commission, the Commonwealth's curriculum intentions continued to be mediated through large scale funding programs. TEP became the Participation and Equity Program, the Computer Education Program signalled the arrival of information

technology as a curriculum challenge, the education of girls emerged as a major policy priority and arguably the Commission's most significant contribution to curriculum debate and policy development, basic skills were highlighted through the Basic Learning In Primary Schools Program. An interesting link developed between CDC and the Commission with initiatives such as the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC). Promoted nationally by CDC, a considerable amount of funds was provided through (BLIPS) to allow the States/Territories to adopt widespread implementation of ELIC. There were other interesting links as well through areas such as gender equity, education and the arts and on the issue of certification in an expanding secondary education. In addition, funds for Projects of National Significance (PNS) were sometimes diverted to CDC to allow it to pursue curriculum related objectives. The bringing together of CDC and the Commission did provide for some important synergies although the "marriage" was not without its tensions and strains at times.

The increasing instrumentalism in Commonwealth curriculum policy did meet with some resistance. Perhaps the classic statement of that resistance by the Commission was *In the National Interest* (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1987). It was written in the Commission's classic style - by the Commissioners themselves-although the driving force behind it was Garth Boomer, then Chair of the Commission. *In the National Interest* was a report on secondary education and youth policy. It sought to define the landscape for a rapidly changing senior secondary sector where retention rates threw into stark relieve the unsuitability of the traditional academic curriculum. The Commission's position was stated clearly at the beginning of the report :

Schools cannot change policies and programs to adjust to specific and short-term changes in the economy. They can, however, provide a good, demanding, general education, developing each individual intellectually to the greatest extent possible. It then follows that people well educated in this way will have the flexibility, initiative and adaptability to contribute productively and positively to the nation, culturally, socially and economically, no matter what circumstances arise. In the Commission's judgment, such a vision for secondary education in Australia in the national interest (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1987, p.2)

This theme was repeated throughout - there needed to be a broader vision for schools than one that saw them simply linked to national economic development. This message was popular with the educational community but not with the third Hawke government. The restructuring of the Commonwealth Public service saw the creation of the mega Department of Employment, Education and Training and the appointment of the mega -Minister, John Dawkins. The Commission's voice was not one the government wanted to hear - not only on the curriculum front but on a number of fronts including funding policy. The voice was extinguished not very long after Dawkins' accession as Minister. This marked the end of any semblance of direct progressivist input to Commonwealth education policy, although bodies like the newly created Schools Council battled valiantly over the next decade to place progressivist views on the policy agenda. Essentially, however, progressivism as a force influencing Commonwealth curriculum policy was dead after 1987. I don't think anyone realised just how dead it was until March 1996 when fully blown neo-

liberalism became the rationale for Commonwealth curriculum policy - but more of that story later.

CDC did not suffer the same fate as the Commission although the Curriculum Development Council was abolished as a statutory body. CDC continued its existence within the new mega Department under the mega Minister. Why was CDC spared? Or was it simply co-opted into a new technocratic environment and able to build on its developing instrumentalist credentials? I think the answer is more complex and takes us to the heart of CDC's curriculum vision.

*Core Curriculum for Australia's Schools* (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980) can be regarded as the progressivist response to ongoing criticism of schools and declining standards. It was the first attempt in Australia to lay out a vision of curriculum access for all Australian students. I want to suggest that this is the enduring legacy of CDC even though the vision has been recontextualised over time and many would say recultured as well. For example, Susan Ryan as Minister for Education was committed to the idea of a national core curriculum. She strongly supported the resolution of the Australian Education Council in June 1986 calling for a national collaborative effort in curriculum development with two main objectives

- to utilize to maximum effect scarce curriculum development resources and
- to ensure that unnecessary differences in curricula from State to State be minimised. (Kennedy, 1989)

Under this rubric, action was pursued through the Curriculum Development Council and the Conference of Directors' - General over the next two years and a list of priority areas was agreed : Science Education, Literacy, Numeracy, and Languages other than English and English as a Second Language. CDC played a significant role in the process through its membership of the Directors of Curriculum who had been given operational responsibility for the AEC's curriculum agenda. This process fed directly into the curriculum agenda of the fourth Hawke government. For the first time, the Australian Education Council was being used as a forum to initiate national curriculum policy - the outcomes may not have been impressive but the message was not surely lost on the new Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training.

While CDC's work through the AEC provided a pathway for the Commonwealth to pursue a more aggressive curriculum agenda, it was not CDC that was providing mainstream advice to the Minister. The Commonwealth's most significant statement on school-level curriculum was prepared without any reference to CDC. *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, a major Ministerial Statement, was released just prior to the May Economic Statement in 1988. Its rhetoric concerning the curriculum sounded new in advocating a common curriculum framework for Australian schools:

A common curriculum framework could, for example, emphasise the need for higher general levels of literacy, numeracy and analytical skills across the nation. The framework must also acknowledge Australia's increasing orientation towards the Asian Pacific region. A major feature of a common curriculum framework would be criteria



for determining content in major subject areas. Criteria for methods of assessing the achievement of curriculum objectives should be outlined. The framework should provide a guide to the best curriculum design and teaching practices. (Dawkins, 1988, p.4).

The rhetoric certainly was new as Piper(1989) has indicated. The language of *Strengthening Australia's Schools* was marked by its instrumental orientation and its managerial perspective - it was not the product of professional educators but of the new technocratic ascendancy within DEET. Yet its objectives in seeking a more coherent approach to the curriculum of Australian schools was by no means new. Similar objectives were being pursued in *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* and through Senator Ryan's support for national curriculum collaboration through the AEC during the second Hawke government. *Strengthening Australia's Schools* is best seen as the extension of these efforts rather than as an entirely new departure in Commonwealth curriculum policy. It was an outcome of the third and fourth Hawke governments' concern with micro-economic reform, the current account deficit, award restructuring. It must also be seen as an attempt to avoid any political fallout from community perceptions concerning declining educational standards. It signalled not so much a new direction for Commonwealth curriculum policy as an old direction given new impetus in the light of perceived economic problems facing the nation.

Like Senator Ryan, Mr Dawkins saw the AEC as the natural forum in which to pursue national curriculum policy objectives. With *Strengthening Australia's Schools* as his platform, he called a special meeting of all Australian Education Ministers on 27 July 1988. The outcomes of the meeting were significant. There was agreement to conduct two major curriculum mapping exercises concerned with general curriculum policies and mathematics - the task was given to the Conference of Directors' - General and was to be undertaken by the Directors of Curriculum from each State and Territory. At the same time a recommendation was accepted to review the structures of a number of existing organisations to see if some rationalisation might be made. Prominent among those organisations was the Curriculum Development Centre, the Australian Council for Educational Research and the Australian Schools Cataloguing Information Service. This commenced a lengthy process that eventually culminated in the wind-down of CDC and the transfer of its materials and some funding to the Curriculum Corporation. CDC had served its purpose from 1987-1989 and was then, like the Commission, discarded. Curriculum directions would from now on be pursued using Intergovernmental mechanisms, on a Minister to Minister basis. This reflected the new ministerialisation of educational decision making in Australia that characterised both State/Territory and Commonwealth governments in the 1980s.

The nationally developed curriculum statements and profiles must be seen in this context. Yet it was by no means a new context - it was not a Dawkins' innovation but rather an adaptation. As indicated above, this kind of national consistency in the curriculum was first advocated in *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools*, it was a goal of Susan Ryan but it found its most aggressive supporter under John Dawkins and his successors. It was the AEC and MCEETYA that finished the agenda and created a new agenda around work related competencies. That is to say, it was the Commonwealth working together with the States and Territories rather than the Commonwealth working alone that seemed to provide the appropriate policy context

for producing more nationally consistent approaches to the school curriculum. How successful the outcomes will be addressed later in the paper.

The Intergovernmental process for curriculum policy making was bequeathed to the Coalition government from March 1996. Its agenda was much more limited than the previous governments : literacy, numeracy and vocational education. It is, quite blatantly, a neo liberal vision seeking to equip students with skills that will enable them to be productive contributors to the market driven economy. It is, if you like, a strategic intervention in the market to ensure that the necessary skill base is available for the efficient operation of the market. At the same time, there has been support for a civics education initiative inherited from the previous government. It has been transformed into an exercise to reinstall history in the school curriculum - young Australians will get to learn about King John, the Stuart kings and their parliaments and chartists on the goldfields. Thus neo-liberalism has been joined with a neo-conservatism as the cornerstone of the Coalition's curriculum policy. These objectives have been pursued exclusively through MCEETYA thus cementing the Commonwealth's curriculum policy function in Intergovernmental decision making.

What now can be made of this thirty year history? What follows is necessarily speculative.

It is a history of ebbs and flows - of waxing and waning government interest. If there is a motif, it is the gradual move towards thinking about national consistency in the provision of an Australian curriculum - evident in the latter days of the first CDC and overwhelming under John Dawkins. Post-Dawkins, the emphasis has been not so much on the curriculum as on assessment and this culminated in the literacy benchmarks. Assessment has always been on the agenda, even in the late 1970s and in some ways the Commonwealth's curriculum agenda has often represented a ducking and weaving around the issues of national assessment. There is strong evidence for example, that *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* was very much an attempt to push national assessment off the Commonwealth's agenda. It has not worked, but it looked as though it might have in 1980 and again in 1993 with the national curriculum statements and profiles. The achievement of the Coalition government, if it can be called that, has been to strip back the curriculum facade and focus exclusively on testing and benchmarks. By century's end, therefore, the Commonwealth has become not the national broker for ensuring young people have access to a common culture but rather the national guardian of educational standards. This role has been played out as much on national television and other media as it has in MCEETYA. It is a diminution of the vision of the 1970s - the triumph of the bully pulpit rather than the enabling hand needed for new times and new challenges.

#### *Theoretical Frameworks for Considering the Commonwealth's Curriculum Interests*

It seems clear that the ebbs and flows of government policy did not take place outside of an implicit and at times quite explicit theoretical framework. In what has been said so far, reference has been made indirectly to a number of broad theoretical underpinnings that seemed to be dominant at different times. I want to labour the point a little, because there has emerged in recent times a view that all that is important are personal theories and that we should not clutter up educators' minds with theoretical dispositions that claim a broader stake of intellectual territory. I am referring, of course, to the poststructuralist conundrum that refuses to admit of

metanarratives and anything beyond the individual and the personal. I want to challenge such an assumption using curriculum policy developments to do so.

During the 1970's, the initial impulse for national curriculum initiatives undoubtedly came from a social progressivism that valued education as the primary tool for promoting a more equitable and fair society. Within such a framework educators were valued so there was never any doubt that such prominent educators as Ken McKinnon and Malcolm Skilbeck should assume national leadership positions. In today's environment they would not even be shortlisted. Outside of broad funding issues that took up so much of the Schools Commission's time, there was a similar commitment. It was well demonstrated, I think in the Innovations Program of the Commission. Grants made directly to teachers to promote local innovation. Such grants were based on the broad theoretical assumption that teachers were human beings with infinite capacity to do good for their students and all they needed was a little encouragement. There was not a need for strategic intervention but simply the creation of an appropriate environment. In this environment teachers would develop their capacities to be better and better teachers. This was the essence of progressivism and it was evident in much of the early work of both CDC and the Commission. It is, for example, at the heart of the rationale for school based curriculum development.

Progressivism is an example of a broad social theory with its roots in eighteenth century romanticism but which has been a powerful influence in Australian education. It cannot be understood as a personal theory - its origins and its influence are much more complex. What is more, what happens from the late 1970s onwards is a gradual extinguishing of this theoretical impulse from the Commonwealth's curriculum policy making agenda. Belief in the perfectibility of the human spirit is supplanted initially with a believe in the power of the State to secure the best outcomes for individuals and eventually with the believe that individuals can only rely on themselves in a competitive social and economic environment. *Homo romanticus* is replaced by *homo economicus* who in the end is overturned by *homo singularis* working in his/her own interest. Another way of saying this is that progressivism turned into instrumentalism which itself has been undermined by neo-liberalism. Any understanding of the Commonwealth's curriculum policy interests is surely enriched when it is seen as part of this broad sweep of theoretical interplay.

The poststructuralist notion that metanarratives must be rejected is itself a reflection of the neo-liberal impulse that exhorts individualism above collectivism. Of course individuals have personal theories constructed from their own experience and knowledge. Yet such theories intersect with the personal theories of others and in turn all of this intersects with broader theoretical dispositions that have constructed life outside of individuals. Being aware of these broader dispositions and their influences surely provides a basis for richer personal theories and more concerted and collective social action. Quite rightly, there has been a rejection of the notion that we are simply *homo economicus*. In the same we need to reject the notion that we are simply individuals free floating in a disconnected world. The vision of CDC and the Schools Commission was one in which there was an "us", "we", working together, a concern for the common good, the public interest. While there is a much needed questioning of other aspects of progressivism, this is an aspect that we should strive to retain for it reinstates the collective "us" which is fast disappearing from not only the policy

discourse but as an impulse within society generally. Poststructuralism does not help us at all on this point. The more individualism is privileged,

### *Teachers Reactions to National Curriculum Directions*

Policy is fine, theory is fine, but what about action? How have those with responsibility for the day to day work of schools responded to this move towards more nationally consistent curriculum with all its theoretical trappings?

There are many ways to approach this section but I want to draw directly on teachers voices as they have been expressed in a three year ARC funded research project that looked at the implementation of the nationally developed curriculum statements and profiles (Kennedy, Marland, Sturman and Forlin, 1996). I know that it is dangerous to let data speak for itself, but let's see what you make of the following :

"Like many others, we're holding our breath and maybe it will go away"

"...it tells us what we have to teach and it outlines all that and we can modify it and use it as we want to but it gives us an idea of what the system wants but I don't know what it does for the kids"

"I kind of got lost in where it was and what it was and what we should do with it and so it got put in a box at home and that was the last I looked at it"

"it is such a huge burden and workload that they are going to have to come up with some really good reasons and valid points for the use of it before teachers will take it on board"

"so many programs have come and gone and you can't expect teachers to give so much without resourcing them"

Now five quotations do not a thesis make, but what I want to demonstrate in a very simple way is that alongside the ebbs and flows in curriculum policy making are the ebbs and flows in teacher commitment to new curriculum policy initiatives. Schools are sites for decision making not sites for technical implementation of policy. The results of our ARC research have been perfectly consistent with international results on the implementation of large scale curriculum reform : adaptation, resistance, uncertainty, domestication, time constraints, lack of professional development were all displayed in one way or another across the three States/Territories that were part of our study.

Teachers' voices are ignored at great risk. Reform is easy - it comes in glossy documents, can be approved by all the right people, can even be legislated and made the subject of announcements by governments. Innovation is much more difficult. It depends on individual teachers taking up the reform and making it come alive for students in classrooms. This was what the early CDC and the Commission tried to do : to make reform sing and dance. To make innovation a real part of the life of schools and their communities. Reform and innovation are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they so often have been when it comes to new curriculum policies. The retreat from progressivism has placed the policy maker's hope in structures, strategies and managerialism. This is thin gruel and it won't produce results. Until innovation is

seen as the other side of reform, we can continue to expect the outcomes of reform efforts that were shown at the beginning of this section.

What of the future? Where ought Australian curriculum policy be heading? What might be an agenda for a CDC or a Schools Commission look like today? I am going to take a lot of license in this next section. But hey, how often do you get an opportunity like this?<sup>3</sup>

The problem that will confront policy makers in the twenty first century is two edged. If they continue to try and control the school curriculum it may well become irrelevant to a generation able to access knowledge in ways unthought of two decades ago. On the other hand, if policy makers accept the potential irrelevance of the traditional, structured curriculum they may be tempted to adopt a decentralised approach to curriculum development. Such an approach does not really address the problem. Handing control of the curriculum over to local interests simply creates another kind of control that is well known in democratic pluralistic states. Local curriculum control will lead to exactly the same outcome as if the problem of centralised control had not been recognised. The real issue for the twenty first century is how to prevent fragmentation of the curriculum, whether that fragmentation results from central or local control.

To avoid fragmentation there is a need to move from a control mentality to a leadership mentality - from mandating details to setting directions. There are four broad areas in which action could be taken :

- < Examining the theoretical impetus underlying the school curriculum
- < Defining key competencies for all students
- < Highlighting the role of citizenship education
- < Focussing on ethical behaviour and moral education

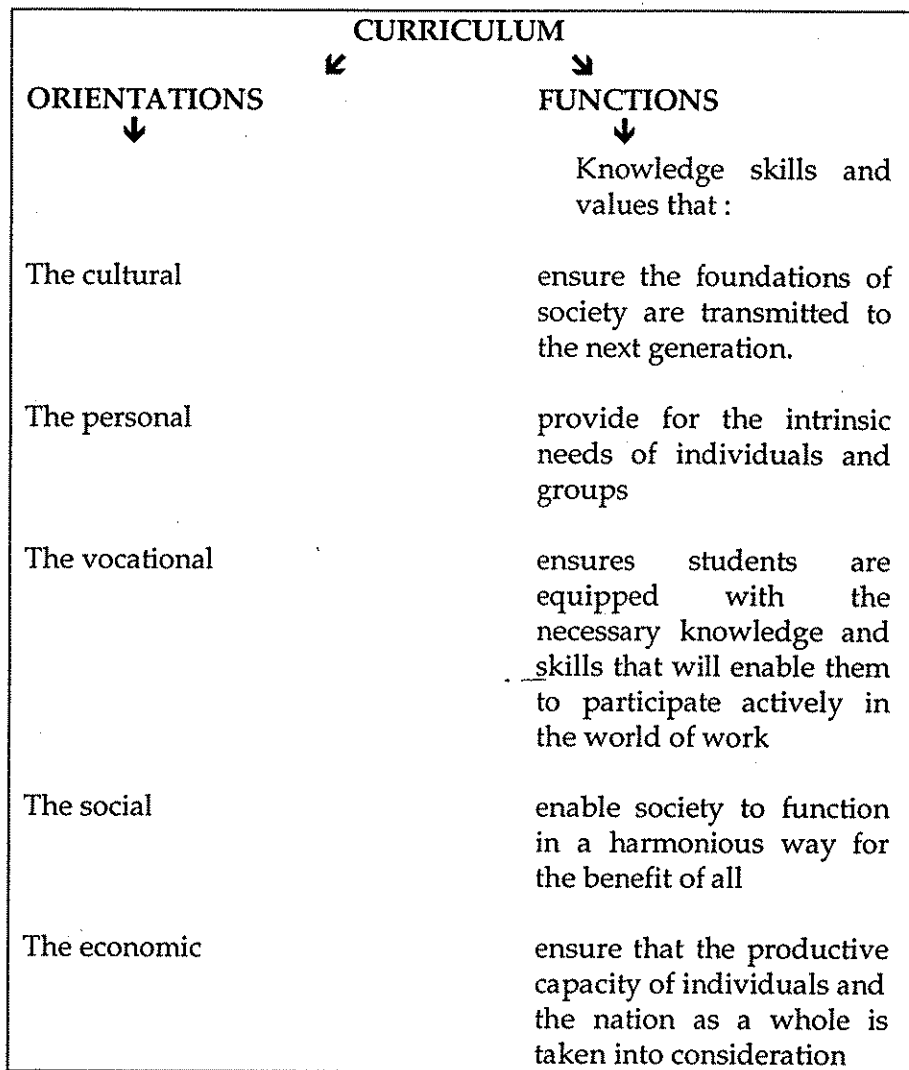
#### *Theoretical issues : From single to multiple conceptions of the school curriculum*

In an important sense academic conceptions of the curriculum both help and hinder at this point. They help in the sense that they provide labels for the different conceptions that are articulated in the broader society but they hinder in as much as these labels tend to compartmentalise. Thus when different orientations to curriculum are labeled as "academic", "instrumental", "self-actualization", "social reconstructionist" and "critical" they construct barriers that suggest these orientations are self contained. The way ahead is not to construct barriers but to create new categories of thinking about the curriculum - categories that will be inclusive of the needs of all the individuals and groups. This would create a model for the curriculum that would take into account the following factors :

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<sup>3</sup> What follows has been taken from *Constructing the School Curriculum for the Twenty First Century: Searching for Boundaries in a Global Society*, a paper I gave to an OECD Conference in Hiroshima in November, 1997.

**Figure 1 : Multiple Perspectives on the School Curriculum**



The main point to note about this proposed model is that the orientations and functions are not seen as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary. In constructing the school curriculum they must all be taken into consideration. It is not a case of one or the other but of ensuring that the curriculum is able to meet the needs of all individuals and groups.

#### *Defining key competencies for all students*

Given that the school curriculum will be characterised by diversity rather than uniformity in the twenty first century, will there be a need to define skills and competencies that all students ought to have, irrespective of their specific curriculum experience? While the question is a modernist one, it is also an important one. Access to knowledge and skills will as much provide access to well being and power in the future as it does now. Unless society in the future is to be determined entirely by the law of the market, there will remain a need to guarantee a minimum level of knowledge and skills for all future citizens.

Defining what is essential in a fragmenting world will not be an easy task. Recently there have been attempts in Australia to define "key competencies". In some areas there is significant agreement : communicating ideas and information, using mathematical ideas and techniques, working with others in teams, using technology, planning and organising activities, collecting, analysing and organising information, solving problems (Borthwick, 1993). Yet in others there has also been considerable contestation : cultural understanding and life management skills have evoked the most debate. It will be important, therefore, to build a consensus around what society values and what can be made part of the experience of all students. Key competencies should not just be focussed on the world of paid employment : they should include the full range of skills and competencies relevant throughout the life span.

It is also important to have a clear view about competencies and competence. There is an old view of competence that focuses on behaviouristic notions of performance and attempts to build competence from discrete bits of behaviour. This is an outmoded view. More recent work (Gonczi, Hager and Olive, 1990; Heywood, Gonczi and Hager, 1992; Hager, 1994; Walker, 1993; Preston and Walker, 1994) suggests that competence is a matter of integrating knowledge, skills and values in such a way that competent performance results. Performance itself is not competence, as in the older behaviouristic notions of competency. Rather, performance is an indicator that the competence is held. Competence can be inferred : it cannot be observed. Thus tasks provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate competence and when this occurs it can be assumed that the student has brought together and understood the relationship between a range of knowledge, skills and values. This makes the issue of assessment crucial and complex (Hager and Butler, 1994; Preston and Kennedy, 1995) but it enriches notions of competency

The important issue is to get a debate going about what is central for young people in the twenty first century and to make this the centrepiece of the curriculum. The debate should not become overly concerned with specific content - the issue is skills and competencies that transcend content. This is not to dismiss the cultural significance of content, : that, too, is an important debate. Rather, the focus needs to be on those processes that will enable young people to access knowledge, understand it, critique it and transform it and to do so on a life long basis. This is the imperative for the next century.

### *Highlighting the role of citizenship education*

How will citizenship be constructed in the twenty first century? In the past, formal courses in civics education have focussed on the structures of government and on constructing an historical context into which all citizens are meant to fit. This will not do for the twenty first century. It will be important to develop a civics education that takes into account present day realities and future needs. Of key importance is the idea that what is reality for adults is not necessarily so for young people.

Whether it is techno music, rave parties, drug taking or early experimentation with sex - young people come under a great deal of pressure to conform to peer expectations and emerging fads. While much of the pressure comes from peers, there are also the mass media sending constant messages about what is new and desirable. Civics education cannot neglect these realities of life for young people, even though they may not be realities for those designing civics education programs.

Often such issues are seen as part of a broader youth culture although as one recent writer has indicated that there is no longer a single discernible trend in youth culture but many trends depending on which young people with which priorities in which locations. It seems wrong to leave young people to cope with issues such as personal identity in the hope of constructing some national identity for them all. Civics education, broadly conceived, could act as a bridge between personal and national identities with so that young people develop a sense of themselves and how they sought to relate to their peers and others with whom they share the planet.

The influence of youth culture on young people is but once social condition that confronts them. Post-school options are now very limited with further education and training offering the best chance for future employment. The specter of unemployment, therefore, looms large for many young people. It adds to the uncertainty that seems to be part of the experience of so many. This uncertainty is not helped by the experience of many in the casual labor market where they often put up with poor working conditions, low wages and arbitrary management practices. There is very little any educational program can do about this broad social context. Yet it is important to understand it and take account of it in any purpose designed civics education program. The ancient Greeks realised only too well that citizens needed to benefit from citizenship if they were to be called on to participate actively in the life of the *polis*. It maybe difficult convincing young people today of the benefits that accrue to them from their citizenship in a society that is unable to guarantee them access to the rewards that others seem to have in such abundance.

Yet democratic citizenship is not only about benefits, it is also about responsibilities. There is now a significant literature on the role of service learning in civics education. Basically, this means providing young people with the opportunity to contribute to their communities by becoming involved in worth while activities. This is to say, civics education should take students outside of the classroom so that they can learn some of the responsibilities of citizenship. They can link up with community service organisations that assist the elderly, that are concerned with environmental issues or that support disaffected youth. Young people can serve their communities and in this way come to understand better the responsibilities of citizenship.

Of course, students should not have to leave their classrooms to experience working in a democracy. The classroom itself, and indeed the whole school community, offers opportunities for democratic living. Whether this is done through Student Representative Councils, mock parliaments or the representation of students on school committees, students can have direct first hand experience of what living in a democracy is like. They can experience both the joys and the frustrations of democratic participation. Democracy should not be solely as something that was developed in the past or something associated with triennial elections : it should be about lived experience in a multitude of contexts.

Citizens of the future will be international citizens. They will require a knowledge base that will help them feel as comfortable in other countries as they do in their own. Regional couplings such as APEC, NAFTA and EU indicate that national boundaries are becoming irrelevant as nations seek advantages from cross national-activities and enterprises. Talk of "European citizenship", for example, highlights just how far at least one region of the world has become just fifty years after a devastating war. There will always be local citizenship, but in the future it will be exercised in a different context where global communication and international travel



will be such that it will be difficult to know when borders have been crossed. Young people need to be prepared for such a future so that the international and the national can co-exist and feed off one another. This must surely be a role for civics education if young people are to be prepared for such a future.

### *Focusing on ethical behaviour and moral education*

In an increasingly fragmenting world, what is to be made of ethics and morality? Again, the question seems to come directly from the constrained world of the modernist. Yet, is there not still a need for young people to be confronted with what is meant by ethical behaviour and why it is important? The reason is not to indoctrinate, but to arm young people. They need to be able to distinguish between right and wrong - to recognise behaviour that is right and wrong in others and to take appropriate action.

History is littered with examples of whole societies being unable to discern right from wrong and embarking on practices that have been contrary to the human spirit and the human soul. This century alone has witnessed death camps, gulags, torture, discrimination, persecution and wars on an international scale. Nuclear weapons, chemical warfare and smart bombs have demonstrated extraordinary skill and knowledge but at the same time revealed a world that needs to understand and value the people who live in it. Technological innovation and values have not always gone together.

At the same time, experience has also shown that attempts to impose a single set of values on a disparate society rarely succeed. What is more, such attempts often lead to regimes that defeat the very purpose of having a set of values in the first place. Enforcement of common values can be a painful process that results in confusing means and ends and that reifies the process of enforcement rather than the values that are being defended. Common values underpinned by a compliance regime are not the way ahead for the twenty first century.

Yet the twenty first century citizen must learn to value those values that respect the human spirit, its hopes, its dreams and its aspirations. Different citizens will have different ideas about those dreams and they will have different ways of working towards them. They may or may not share a view about the ultimate source or purpose for living and they may indeed have quite opposite views. But they will recognise this difference as positive and they will celebrate the difference. What will bring all citizens together is this respect for difference and an ability to see how difference means a richer, more varied, more diverse experience for everyone. Difference can be shared and therefore appreciated. Difference should not be what divides citizens, but what brings them together in an effort to learn more from and about one another.

How to bring this kind of moral or ethical education about will be the most significant challenge facing the twenty first century. Yet it has to be on the educational agenda if societies are not to disintegrate completely or break down because the only principle operating is that of self interest. Young citizens must first be taught to value values. They will need to be people who have a well thought out set of values for themselves, who respect other people's values and who at times will see virtue in sacrificing personal gain for the good of others. They will need to accept that there will be at times a common good that will not meet their own personal

needs, balancing the personal and the common will be the moral dilemma facing many young people in the twenty first century.

The sources of morality and ethics will be as contested in the next century as they have been over time. Different nations, and groups within nations, have looked to religion of one kind or another for their inspiration. This search will undoubtedly continue. Others have looked to secular issues such as environmental protection, the elimination of discriminatory practices against different groups and the protection of children from exploitation. These areas provide a source not only of values but of explicit social action designed to restore harmony in fractured relationships. Thus the difference between overtly religious and secular values has been blurred. In Australia, for example, the strongest voice in support of reconciliation with indigenous peoples has been the churches. In the future, barriers such as secular and religious may be broken down so that all those who embrace positive values can come together. This would certainly provide a platform that would assist young people both understand and embrace the need to value values as a central part of the lifespan experience.

#### **But how can there be community in a fragmenting world?**

The fundamental question facing policy makers in the twenty first century will be how to provide leadership that will facilitate social cohesion in an otherwise fragmented world. One approach would be that described by Gale (1994) in relation to education policy in general. He referred to the notion of "education policy settlements" that masquerade as solutions to policy problems. The settlements are usually short term in nature and there is often a need for resettlements when the problem surfaces again :

In this way, pragmatic, progressive and liberal ideologies...compete to determine what we mean by education and what the role of education in society should be, while particular educational ideologies in dominance (and in becoming dominant) find alliance with particular dominant economic and political ideals and practices, sometimes sharing similar sets of assumptions and sometimes not.  
(Gale, 1994, p.9)

Gale has described the main characteristic of educational policy making in the twentieth century : a process that characterises the pluralistic State. Yet the concept of "settlement" is an important one - the notion that solutions can be found, that they will involve negotiation and that they might contain what appear to be ideologically inconsistent constituents.

What will be needed in the twenty first century will be curriculum settlements that will allow communities to come together and agree about the directions the school curriculum will take. No one should be excluded from these deliberations, and in particular students should not be excluded. Directives from Head Office, or even the Principal's office, will not work. If there is to be a commitment to a common citizenship, a common set of skills and a common set of values then citizens will need to be involved in determining these. This will be the *sine qua non* of the twenty first century. As barriers and structures are removed in all areas of activity, citizens will become used to making decisions for themselves. It will be no different in education. Participative and collaborative mechanisms must lay the foundation for curriculum

in the twenty first century. The urgent task of governments and policy makers is to put such mechanisms into place so that the new millennium can be informed by both a curriculum process and curriculum outcomes that meet the real need for community in an otherwise fragmenting world. To ignore this imperative will be to put young people in the twenty first century at risk.

### Conclusion

I do not want to suggest that we need to return to the "good old days" of CDC and the Schools Commission. What I do want to suggest, however, is that there are some valuable lessons for us to learn from the vision of education that these bodies represented. We have seen that vision distorted in recent years by the need to focus on economic reconstruction and by the turn in ideology that constructs us as individuals competing in local, national and international marketplaces. We need to establish community in a postmodern world, we need to focus on social justice and equity so that all might benefit and we need to value those things that bring us together as well as those things that make groups and individuals distinctive. This calls for a new progressivist vision of education that can take hold at the beginning of the next millennium - without such a vision we shall be left, and will leave for our children, a sterile and barren view of education that serves on only instrumental purposes. This is the challenge that now confronts us all.

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Schools in Australia: 1973-1998

The 25 Years Since the Karmel Report

Australian Council for Educational Research

Holiday Inn, Coogee Beach  
Sydney

8-9 October 1998

Past, Present and Future

Peter Karmel

## Summary

The period since *Schools in Australia* was published has been one of very great change:

Economic. We now live in an economy with a strong market orientation and one which has undergone an information-technological transformation. These factors have impacted with great force on the labour market, especially on: the industrial and occupational structures; the balance between male and female employment, between full and part time employment and between continuing and casual employment; and unemployment, especially of the unskilled young.

Social. Our society now places much more emphasis on social justice issues, access and equity, multiculturalism and tolerance. It has experienced a transformation in attitudes to family, marriage and lifestyle.

Ideological. The economic paradigm has undergone a quantum shift: from the ideal of a mixed economy of the post World War II era to one subject to the principles of "economic rationalism". This has been accompanied by a decline in the willingness of governments to devote resources to education.

The broad purposes of education fall into six groups:

- . development of the person;
- . socialisation of the individual;
- . induction into citizenship;
- . provision of a knowledge base;
- . acquisition of key competencies;
- . specific vocational skills.

What trends in school education are significant in the context of its broad purposes and of social and economic change? The following are important:

- . a shift in the responsibility for funding education from the public towards the private sector;
- . a substantial increase in participation at all levels of education;
- . a marked emphasis on the labour market aspects of schooling;
- . tendencies to more central direction in education;
- . an increasing involvement of politicians in setting educational agenda accompanied by a decreasing willingness to trust professionals.

These trends have exacerbated tensions within education systems. Tensions exist between:

- . freedom of choice and a common quality of schooling;
- . political and professional educational leadership;
- . managerial and collegial styles of management;
- . vocational and general education.

What are the lessons for the future?

- . Social and economic change is not inevitable: educational institutions should seek to exert influence on the social and economic environment;
- . the specifically vocational purposes of education should not be overweighted;
- . the professional standards and status of teachers should be enhanced;



- . widespread analytical debate on education should be encouraged, especially involving professional participation;
- . educational institutions are *sui generis* and should be run accordingly;
- . educational participation should be expanded towards a 100 per cent goal;
- . additional resources should be provided, even if the price is higher taxation.

[Passages appropriate for quotation are sidelined in the text.]

## Past, Present and Future

I am devoting this wind up paper to the past as well as to the way forward, because I believe (with some passion) that we need to know the past to understand the present and we need to understand the present to be able to influence the future - a somewhat trite proposition that our policy makers too often forget.

Educational institutions, and what goes on in them, cannot be examined in isolation from the social and economic context in which they are embedded. They are influenced as institutions, and in their philosophies, methodologies and the subject matter they treat, by the context in which they work- a context which, one hopes, they can, in turn, influence.

### Past Change

The period since *Schools in Australia*<sup>1</sup> was published has been one of very great change. The changes may be clustered under economic, social and ideological headings.

#### Economic Trends

On the economic front we now live in a much more competitive world than we did 25 years ago. The management of our economic affairs has a strong market orientation: the removal of trade barriers, the reduction in the protection of Australian manufactured goods, the elimination of subsidies for agricultural products and

the freeing of the exchange rate have opened Australia to international competition and to the globalisation of economic affairs.

Alongside these, technological progress has powerfully accelerated; in particular information technology has been universally adopted as an aid to management and business operations and as a driving force in the globalisation of communication.

These developments have had their greatest visible impact on the labour market. The industrial structure has been transformed with the continuing decline in primary production as an employer of labour and the marked fall in employment in manufacturing industry. Service industries have constituted the area of expansion even though public sector employment has been declining. Alongside the changed industrial distribution of the work force have been shifts in the occupational distribution. Demand for the most highly skilled people has expanded with a relative decline for those with medium levels of skill.

The most obvious change in the labour market over the past 25 years is the increase in unemployment, particularly among the young and the older. Until the early 1970s Australia had enjoyed virtual full employment for the best part of 30 years: unemployment as statistically measured had been around 2 to 3 percent. More recently, unemployment has been in the 8 to 9 percent range and has been stuck there for some time. This seems unlikely to change. In addition, there are

many who have withdrawn from the workforce, although they would seek employment if it were available; and others who, although employed, are unable to obtain as much work as they wish.

Changes in the industrial and occupational distribution of the workforce and the significantly increased participation of women have resulted in major shifts from full-time to part-time employment and from continuing to casual employment. These, together with the decline in public sector employment, have been at least partly responsible for the decline in trade union membership. They have led to more uncertainty in the labour market.

Compared with 25 years ago the labour market has been transformed. This has had significant consequences. The distribution of income has become less equal: a greater share of income is going to those at the top and greater numbers of people are located at the bottom, producing a disappearing middle in the income distribution.<sup>2</sup> In the same way the profile of working hours appears to have been hollowed out, with a concentration of those working relatively few hours and those working long hours, while working standard hours has become less than the norm.<sup>3</sup> Those living in poverty tend to pass on their disadvantages to their children and there is evidence that poverty is becoming focussed in geographical areas.<sup>4</sup> Full-time employment for the less skilled (especially early school leavers) has become increasingly difficult to obtain. Many of these less skilled have a level of productivity lower than the socially acceptable minimum wage and are therefore trapped in unemployment. These

trends could be detected from the late 1970s onwards: change has not occurred through a sudden discontinuity but has been a gradual process.

### Social Trends

Just as the last 25 years have seen massive economic change so there has been great social change. The final laying to rest of the White Australia policy occurred in the early 1970s and less discriminatory migration policies followed. With this came the notion of a multi-cultural Australia with a commitment to a more pluralist view of the world involving the maintenance of cultural identities, the toleration of non-dominant cultures and the drive for social justice for ethnic minorities. Social justice has been an important theme over the whole period: equitable treatment for girls and women, for indigenous Australians, for the disabled and for those with non-mainstream sexual preferences. The last several decades have seen transformations in social mores particularly in relation to the family, marriage and lifestyle. However, the greater concerns for social fairness and tolerance have, as I have just pointed out, been accompanied by greater economic inequality, constituting a deep conflict running through our society.

### Ideological Shift

The prevailing assumptions about the Australian economy have undergone a quantum shift: the nature of the economy and how it should work - what may be termed the "economic paradigm". Twenty-five years ago, although

Australia was a private enterprise economy, the paradigm was one of a mixed economy with a commitment to welfare policies. The public sector had a major role not only in ensuring full employment, economic growth and a fair distribution of income, but in guaranteeing Australia's physical infrastructure, in underwriting educational and health institutions and in operating public utilities such as power, water and transport.

This paradigm has suffered a mutation. The emphasis is now on the provision of goods and services through deregulated markets with as small a public sector as possible. One hears little of a mixed economy or of a commitment to full employment. The tenets of so-called "economic rationalism" have become the accepted ideology, propagating faith in the pre-eminence of the market in bringing about efficient production and effective outcomes. Such concepts as user pays, purchaser-provider arrangements, outsourcing, strategic planning, benchmarking, world's best practice and performance indicators have become the currency of modern public policies. Economic policies are being driven by a philosophical stance rather than by judgments on the balance of advantages flowing from the consequences of political decisions - by a "rationalist" economic doctrine rather than by a rational assessment of social and economic outcomes.

A major consequence of the paradigm shift in our economic affairs has been to exert pressure for lower taxation by reducing the size of the public sector. Added to this, a significant part of the budget has to be devoted to the

problem of high unemployment, through the various manpower programs directed to its amelioration and the provision of unemployment benefits, further reducing funding available for public services.

The net upshot, as far as education is concerned, has been a significant decline in the proportion of gross domestic product that governments have devoted to public outlays on education at all levels. During the 1960s and until the latter part of the 1970s this proportion had risen quite appreciably, from 3 per cent in 1961/62 to 6 per cent in 1977/78. Since the latter year, however, it has declined steadily and now stands at slightly under 5 per cent.

### **Present Consequences**

#### Purposes of Education

What has been the impact of all this change on educational institutions and what they do? In considering this, I want to keep in mind the broad purposes of education, as I understand them. They fall into six main areas:

- . development of the person, so that the individual may better enjoy the experiences of living;
- . socialisation of the individual, so that he/she can participate in activities with other individuals;
- . induction into citizenship, so that people can act as responsible citizens and participate effectively in community and national affairs;

- . provision of a knowledge base about the physical and social worlds;
- . acquisition of key competencies for life and work;
- . specific vocational skills.

### Impact of Change

As already pointed out, the provision of public resources for education has been constrained since the late 1970s. To a degree this has shifted responsibility for funding education towards the private sector. Manifestations of this are the relative growth in the number of non-government schools and of enrolments in them, the relaxation of the controls on the establishment of new non-government schools, the introduction of fees in some government schools, the introduction of fees for many post-secondary courses and the institution of HECS arrangements in universities.

Notwithstanding constrained resources, participation in post-compulsory education has more than doubled over the past 25 years. Retention to the last year of secondary school rose from 33 per cent in 1972 to 72 per cent in 1997 (having peaked at 77 per cent in 1992). In higher education, life time access increased from about 20 per cent of an age cohort in 1971 to about 45 per cent currently. The pressure for spending longer in education has come from the importance of acquiring higher qualifications and from the collapse of full time employment opportunities for the unskilled young.



Over the last two or three decades the economic aspects of education have been increasingly emphasised. The first paper<sup>5</sup> I delivered on education (in 1962) included, as you might expect, a plea for greater spending on education. While acknowledging the broad purposes of education it emphasised education as an investment. This was done largely as a selling point. In the Report of 1973, the special functions of schools were emphasised: "the acquisition of skills and knowledge, initiation into the cultural heritage, the valuing of rationality and the broadening of opportunities to respond to and participate in artistic endeavours."<sup>6</sup> No emphasis was placed on the economic benefits of schooling although the importance of schooling in acquiring skills was acknowledged. However, from the mid-1980s education as an investment has become a significant element in public debate: the connections between schools and the labour market have been emphasised with employment related key competencies being given a central role and the development of vocational subjects within schools. As far as higher education and vocational education and training are concerned, the connection between educational institutions and the labour market has been, and is, ever present.

Having myself emphasised the importance of the economic aspects of education, I now wonder whether the economic dimensions might not have been over-sold. High standards of education are almost certainly a necessary condition for a healthy economy and for economic growth but are not, in themselves, a sufficient condition. The notion that more focussed vocational training will lead to jobs has not been demonstrated. Moreover, disillusionment

with education follows when educational expenditure or educational reform does not bring promised benefits: educational institutions are blamed for not doing what they cannot do.

The Report of 1973 was mainly about providing more resources for schools. The appointment of the committee responsible for the Report was the culmination of more than a decade's agitation to increase school resourcing. Consequently the Report emphasised inputs: teachers, libraries, buildings. Not that the Report ignored what education is about: the second and third chapters on values and perspectives and equality of opportunity clearly related to outcomes, but the emphasis was still on inputs.

Twelve years later these issues were revisited by the Quality of Education Review Committee.<sup>7</sup> The Review Committee produced a Report which was outcome-oriented, defining outcomes in terms of a range of competencies. The educational debate shifted from a major concern with resources (inputs) to a concern with outcomes and more particularly with measurable outcomes. From this there has developed a demand for the testing of basic skills (literacy and numeracy) in schools and for the use of competency based testing in vocational education and training. The notion of testable key competencies has developed, involving a belief in the feasibility of developing generic competencies in which the emphasis can be on process rather than content.

During the 1970s the Commonwealth Government increased its commitment to devoting resources to education - a commitment which has now declined. The increased resources from the Commonwealth brought with it a greater Commonwealth involvement in educational affairs. The Commonwealth has exerted its influence through the regular meetings of the Commonwealth and State Ministers. Thus in 1989, the Australian Education Council (the conference of Ministers for Education of the Commonwealth, States and Territories) agreed on "common and agreed national goals for schooling in Australia".<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, National Curriculum Statements and Profiles were developed for eight areas of learning to underpin schooling across the nation.<sup>9</sup>

During the past two years the Commonwealth has been particularly active in underlining the importance of literacy and numeracy and in promoting collaborative arrangements with the States in relation to literacy and numeracy. In March 1997 the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to a National Literacy and Numeracy Plan with specified goals; a year later, it approved Australia's first national literacy standards for all children in year 3 and year 5<sup>10</sup> Regular literacy and numeracy testing in schools is being introduced, with an emphasis on early detection of, and intervention for, students at risk, and remedial programs for older persons with literacy and numeracy problems. The Commonwealth has also been active in supporting the development of civics and citizenship education within the key learning area of Studies of Society and Environment.<sup>11</sup> Thus, there are tendencies

towards more central direction in education in spite of a more pluralist ideology in economic and social affairs.

Finally, there has been an increasing involvement of Ministers in setting agenda within education systems and institutions. The management of teaching and the curricula has, to a degree, switched from professional to political guidance, whether political is written with a small p or a large P. The political heads of education ministries are now much more involved in determining the content and style of what goes on within education systems and institutions than they used to be. At the same time, the chiefs of the educational bureaucracies are more sensitive to political considerations.

Within institutions a more managerial approach is becoming common. The professionals are less trusted and accountability is being intensified. Measurable performance indicators have become standard procedure - even though performance indicators are often misleading and productive of unintended consequences. Emphasis on measurable student outcomes may well divert attention from the importance of the quality of inputs, especially the quality of teachers. This makes the recruitment of high performing and well motivated students to the teaching profession all the more critical for the future of Australia's schools.

### Tensions

Given the breadth of the purposes of education and the nature of schools and other educational institutions,

there are bound to be tensions among educational objectives and within the educational environment. The social, economic and ideological trends of the past 25 years have exacerbated these tensions.

A principal concern relates to choice and diversity of schooling on the one hand and equity on the other. Schools are an essential institution for the enhancement of individuals' life chances, for social cohesion and for the socialisation of young people into Australian society; a strong argument on equity grounds exists for providing a common schooling for all. On the other hand, the provision of diverse schools is likely to lead to fruitful innovation; and persuasive arguments are mounted in favour of parental choice in decisions about children's schooling. Schemes for vouchers or for greater local control of individual schools are likely to result in great differences in school quality, locking the poor into low achieving schools and a cycle of poverty. Being irreconcilable objectives, tension between freedom of choice and a common quality of schooling is bound to persist. Similarly, tension exists between a pluralist system of school values and the notion of common core values for all Australians.

Within educational systems tensions exist between political and professional leadership. Again, these are not likely to be easily resolved, although one would hope that policies would evolve as a result of genuine dialogue between the political and professional arms of educational policy making and administration. Within institutions there are not dissimilar tensions between

managerial and collegial styles of organisation and management.

Given the range of the purposes of education, emphasis on labour market objectives is bound to conflict with broader goals. The issue boils down to the old tension between narrowly defined vocational education and general education. The increasing emphasis on labour market objectives in recent years has made this a lively issue. Similarly, a focus on tightly specified educational outcomes conflicts with the broader purposes of education. Recent tendencies to concentrate on rather narrow educational outcomes may reflect a view that too much is expected of schools and a reduced set of expectations may result in doing less but doing it more effectively.

### **The Way Forward**

What lessons for the future can we derive from the foregoing? I shall make just seven points.

First, I do not believe that we should accept all social and economic change as inevitable. Our educational institutions themselves should exert some influence on our social and economic environment. We are not necessarily at the mercy of unresponsive gods.

Second, we should pursue all the purposes of education and not overweight the specifically vocational ones. We should not assume that the gaining of specific skills necessarily leads to the creation of more jobs.

Moreover, we need to give due attention to the content of what is taught. Emphasis on process without content is not likely to lead to an understanding of the world in which we live. Young people need education not only to cope with change but also to live in a complex and uncertain environment.

Third, we need to maintain and enhance the professional standards of our teachers. We should encourage high performing students into the profession; we should improve their courses of study, especially in the depth of their subject studies; we should raise pre-service and in-service standards. Not least, conditions of employment need to be significantly improved and the status of the profession raised.

Fourth, we should seek wide-spread analytical debate on education with a greater public participation of authoritative voices - academics, principals, officials and teachers. Policy should be influenced by leaders from outside the political and bureaucratic areas. We need to return to the days of expert commissions issuing public reports, administering programs and exerting real influence.

Fifth, the community, and especially politicians, should accept that educational institutions are *sui generis* and should be run accordingly. We should not allow ourselves to become captive to the mantras of modern managerialism in which the problems of management are abstracted from the content of what is being managed.

Sixth, we need to continue to encourage growth in educational participation in a diversified system, which aspires to excellence in standards (even though this may, from time to time, conflict with equity considerations). We should aim to raise retention to the end of secondary schooling to levels near 100 per cent. We should pay special attention to those geographical areas, those categories of the population and those schools that are lagging behind. To a near 100 per cent retention we should add a system of an entitlement for all men and women to a quantum of post-school education in courses appropriate to their needs and abilities.

Finally, the community must recognise that if it is to move in these directions it will have to be willing to devote more resources to education. The price of this may well be higher taxation. We have to signal to governments that, if the price is higher taxation, then so be it.



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## **ACER CONFERENCE**

### **SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA, 1973-1998: THE 25 YEARS SINCE THE KARMEL REPORT**

**8 – 9 OCTOBER 1998**

#### ***MOVING FORWARD IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA***

**CHERYL VARDON, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EDUCATION, WA**

#### **Abstract:**

In Western Australia the journey of change for schooling is being driven by the needs of local school communities, rather than as management restructuring. Changes are moderated, transformed and translated in their implementation. In this session, Ms Vardon will outline the devolution paradigm in Western Australia and describe the filters of change and the unexpected outcomes that must be taken into account. Filters of change are cultural and political and in Western Australia are emphasised by remoteness and the diverse nature of the State with its large number of widely dispersed schools. By well-informed preparedness and by listening to the stories of those who will be affected by change, the challenge now is for educators to work powerfully with each school community to achieve their particular mission.

## **MOVING FORWARD IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

### **THE JOURNEY OF CHANGE**

The values espoused by the Karmel Report continue to have a major influence on educational policy and decisions. This session is focussing on devolution of responsibility, management and structural matters. However, the values of equality, diversity, choice or a role for both public and private schooling, community involvement, maintenance of the special or distinctive purposes of schools and lifelong learning are intertwined in any change program and must be felt and thought about – not just found in the rhetoric.

The journey of change from theory to policy to implementation is a long one with many alternative routes and crossroads. There is some rough terrain and no obvious short cuts. Proposed changes are moderated, filtered and shaken about before they have an impact. The impact of change can bring about unintended consequences if we are too eager and driven by ideology. In any major change for schools there will be conflicting mandates.

Change in all systems is affected by cultural and political values, local interests and powerful lobby groups. We all know and have experienced the antique and well-polished hatreds and suspicions, which greet well-meaning change agents.

There is something else about educational change in Australia over the years that is interesting to assess as a filter for change. That is the implementation style. Pre-, and post-, the Karmel Report, our leaders at all levels including our school leaders have, in the main, been male. Western language and narrative forms shape how men act and celebrate their lives as heroic journeys. Change is a challenge and the challenge is to crashing through and forcing the change. It is about trials and tests and it is about winning. This is the archetypal life script for men. Man tackles change as the epic hero in an updated version of the classic odyssey. It is a war where battle tactics are employed, unions dealt with, parents become adversaries and changes are planted triumphantly onto schools.

But while this may have been the prevailing management ethos it does not fit comfortably with the business of schooling. This is a service involving families and children. This is a service preparing young people for the rest of their lives. It is essentially a service that exists

to promote competence, self-worth, tolerance, cooperation and the development of human potential. It deserves to be managed and delivered with an implementation style sympathetic to its essential nature.

Too often educational change is about power and personalities jumping on board with the prevailing ideology. This can distort and debilitate reform endeavours.

But the tide is turning and this culture is being challenged. There are too many failures, too much hurt and polarisation. This is damaging to the government school system. Too often change, as part of the heroic odyssey, is dumped on top of current chaos and unpreparedness - ending up with uncomfortable mediocrity and uneven advantage. I am proud to say that we did not do this in Western Australia. Our challenge is to work powerfully together to achieve a particular mission for each school community – this is devolution.

We have been engaged in an epic journey in the 25 years since the release of the Karmel Report. In Western Australia, like other systems in Australia, the journey has been towards a system providing more scope for decisions to be made at the school community level and working out what that means.

I am going to tell you a bit about Western Australia and then tell our story of change, a story of wholesale changes implemented relatively peacefully and with consensus.

## **FILTERS OF CHANGE – THE TYRANNY OF DISTANCE**

In Western Australia, the filters of change are the same as those operating in other states and systems. In Western Australia though the demographics make the difference. How can we translate the theory of devolution into implementation in this State? How do we keep the focus on those values, avoiding the unintended consequences to children and their families.

Keep in mind that Western Australia occupies a land area of some 2.5 million square kilometres. It is isolated from other Australian states, both in distance and with a time difference. The settlement patterns associated with agricultural, pastoral and mining development, coupled with the commitment of the government and Catholic school systems to statewide equity of provision, historically required a very large number of small, widely

dispersed schools and innovative strategies for dealing with the 'tyranny of distance'. There has always been a recognition that something 'different' is necessary for Western Australia. A school system originally designed for the densely populated British Isles was obviously unsuitable for a small population spread unevenly over such an enormous area.

Twenty-five years ago we had 8 182 teachers (FTE) and 185 220 students. Today we have 15 455 (FTE) teachers and 259 690 students – and we are still growing.

Over seventy percent of all Western Australians live in the Perth region. Perth is the most isolated capital city in Australia – closer to Jakarta than it is to Sydney. There are only four provincial centres with populations of over 20 000. A further ten centres have between 5 000 and 10 000 people. Until I came to Western Australia and started travelling around the Western Desert and the Kimberley, I had a limited notion of 'remote'. Seeing the map is not travelling the country!

The Goldfields Education District is roughly the same size as South Australia. However there are only 34 government schools with 7 103 students. Individual school populations range from 15 to 1 500.

Kiwirrkurra Remote Community School is the most remote school in the world. The school is 1 800 kilometres by road from Kalgoorlie and 1 000 from Alice Springs. The trip by road from Kalgoorlie takes around 25 hours. There are another ten schools which are over 1 000 kilometres from the district office in Kalgoorlie.

What meaning does devolution or local management of schools have for a community left to its own devices for weeks on end with very little contact with other people outside the community – even from the district education office?

The Goldfields District Education Office has a small annexe at Giles. Giles is a small and remote outpost. Giles is also one of only three remote placements for weather bureau personnel. The bureau's other remote placements are at Antarctica and at Willis Island, off the Queensland coast.

Professional development activities for teachers are sometimes held at Alice Springs or Yulara, which are the closest centres for many teachers in the Goldfields district. The district office provides services for large schools in biggish towns to small remote schools servicing homeland communities.

The **Kimberley District** covers Broome in the west, Fitzroy Crossing in the south, Kalumburu in the north and Kununurra in the east. There are 22 schools in the district with 4 596 students. **Oombulgurri Remote Community School** is one. It began in 1914 and is situated in the remote community of Oombulgurri 100 kilometers north/north-west of Wyndham on the Forrest River.

The only current access to this community is by light aircraft or barge. The air trip is a relaxing 35-minute journey from Kununurra, the barge trip 8-12 hours.

There are 98 students at the school and 7 teachers.

Kalumburu is another isolated school in the Kimberley, located 300 km as the crow flies from Kununurra. Access to Kalumburu is either by light aircraft or by road. The access road is closed for 6 months of the year in the wet season and is an unsealed, four-wheel drive only road. Kalumburu has 140 students and 11 teachers.

Looking now to the south of the state and to **Northcliffe**, a town 400 kilometres south-west of Perth and 31 kilometres south of Pemberton. The economy is based on dairy and beef farming, timber and tourism. The town is surrounded by national parks and forest of giant karri trees.

The population of 1 000 people has increased steadily with families seeking a change in lifestyle and moving into the district.

Although Northcliffe is geographically isolated with limited infrastructure and poor telecommunication reception, the strong sense of community and a wealth of talented individuals create a unique and caring learning environment.

Northcliffe District High School caters for children aged from 3 years to 15 years. The student population is increasing with 30 pre-primary students, 109 primary students and 48 secondary students. Three school buses provide a free service to and from school for more than 100 students living in outlying areas.

There are 18 teachers at the school. Many have settled in the area and are permanent staff with at least five years experience. With limited accommodation in the town some staff travel to work from the nearest towns of Pemberton and Quinninup.

Some of you may be familiar with the wines from the **Margaret River** area, some 310 kilometres south of Perth.

Aside from viticulture, the major industries are dairy, beef, sheep farming, fruit growing and tourism. Wine growing remains the major attraction to the district, especially during the summer months with the coast only 7 kilometres away.

Self employed or unemployed families make up 44% of the families at the Margaret River Primary School. Nearly half the school's 540 primary students live in the townsite. Eight buses transport students from seven small rural communities.

I think of **Katanning** as a microcosm of diversity. The town is 288 kilometres south-east of Perth.

The culturally diverse population of 5 300 has a significant number of Cocos and Christmas Islander, Aboriginal (Noongar) and farming communities. The Islander community is involved in the local meat works for the export trade. The farming activity is mainly centred on sheep and crops - wheat, canola, lupin and barley.

The cultural diversity of the town is reflected in the school's student populations. Katanning Senior High School has twenty different ethnic backgrounds represented amongst its 475 students. A significant number of the students of Katanning Senior High School come from isolated farms or communities, boarding at the Great Southern Residential College.

Katanning Primary School draws students from the town and the surrounding farming community. It is also a multi-racial school. 20% of the student population is Aboriginal and a further 10% Islander. A small percentage (10%) of the students live on farms and approximately 25% are from single parent families.

Most Braeside Primary School students are from families living permanently in Katanning, although a significant number as with the other schools, are transient. The diversity of the population is also reflected with 10% Islander and 10% Noongar students and a number identified as having socio-economic disadvantage.

I am discovering more about Western Australia every day. It is a vast, difficult, rugged and romantic place. The nature of the state forces us to think differently about educational change.

### **THE FILTERS OF CHANGE – LISTENING TO THOSE AFFECTED BY CHANGE**

The filters of change include those things that are hard to do. One of the hardest things to do is listening to the stories of those affected by change. Often we say we listen and we engage in certain activities that we call evaluation. But in the end we don't listen – we say we know best and go ahead regardless with resulting conflict. Listening to students is not a bad place to start along with listening to teachers and parents.

I remember a child who came to visit me following the decision to close her secondary school. She said to me, "Did you know that you closed my primary school as well when I was there?" Will her story about her school days be as proud and positive as the stories about schooling that we tell for her? It was worth spending time with the cohort of students who had been affected in that way.

Speaking with students across the state enables me to be confronted with issues of equality and diversity. Listening and responding maintains our values and allows us to fit responses into the pattern of change. Our changes then have more integrity for each student and for each family.



## MAKING THE CIRCUMSTANCES RIGHT – THE DEVOLUTION PARADIGM

Western Australia enjoys a relatively strong economic situation. Western Australia is vastly different from the Victoria the Kennett Government inherited, leading up to the Schools of the Future reforms. Our issues are different – linked more to our diverse circumstances, to providing equality of opportunity for all students rather than to economic circumstances.

How do we translate the theory of devolution into implementation in this state? What has been different in Western Australia, what has been successful for us?

We have been determined to make the circumstances right before we move forward. Our process of change has been constantly modified in a positive way by the filters of change. If filters become blocked, they become barriers. We have not wanted to erect barriers. We have been acutely aware of, and responsive to, the demands of our demographics. And we keep checking our steps to make sure that the changes we implement will promote an improved learning environment for our students regardless of their background or location. We have maintained the values outlined in the Karmel Report.

We have listened to those people affected by change and responded. We have also maintained a clear focus on students in the face of powerful lobby groups such as the home schooling group. The cultural and political filters familiar to us all have affected and shaped our policies. We have prepared for local management in a careful and caring way. The epic journey we are taking is a cautious journey. The policies are in place so that devolution is well supported and equity does not fall by the wayside. Over the last two years we have nurtured the system to get it ready for the big change - local management of schools by school communities. Our work has concentrated on strengthening the system first.

This is how we have done it. The **curriculum**, our most important work, has undergone change. The newly developed Curriculum Framework is a major reform. Decisions to make significant curriculum changes are not taken lightly. The development of the curriculum has taken a number of years and has involved about ten thousand people including parents, teachers, students, academics, employers and community leaders. The Framework establishes common educational outcomes expected of *all* students. It represents a significant shift from a content-based curriculum to an outcomes-based curriculum framework, setting out what

students should know, value and be able to do. The Framework provides enough flexibility to allow teachers and schools to develop learning programs for the individual needs of their students. It acknowledges and provides for diversity. Government schools will be well supported in the implementation of the curriculum over five years. We want to do it well, not quickly.

It isn't easy. We have to work hard to make sure teachers in all schools have the support they need to implement our curriculum improvement program. Curriculum improvement officers are employed in every district office with flexibility to tailor professional development programs based on the particular needs of the teachers in their district. This is not enough and we are taking advantage of improved access to learning technologies to supplement programs delivered face to face.

The recently established **Centre for Excellence** in Teaching is an initiative designed to support and promote excellence in the teaching profession. Professional isolation need not be an issue in Western Australia. The Centre will use the Internet and coordinate the delivery of professional courses to all teachers in both the government and non-government sectors across the state. The Centre is being run by teachers for teachers.

Paying attention to the **early years of schooling** has been a priority with improved access for 4 year olds, full-time access for 5 year olds and a reduction in class sizes. We are progressively reducing class sizes in years one to three – down to 24 by 2003.

The **Students at Educational Risk Strategy** is what I refer to as our insurance policy. This strategy has been developed to prevent some of our students slipping through the cracks. It is about inclusivity. It is about schools having processes in place to identify students who are at risk of not achieving the major learning outcomes. The strategy involves the reorganisation and coordination of existing resources, programs and elements such as teaching methods, and the development of new ones. We will be offering specific training for teachers so that they know how to identify and intervene at an early stage, not just in urban and town settings but in places like Halls Creek where intervention is a community effort.

We are also placing a high priority on the education of Aboriginal students. In the past, they have been the most severely disadvantaged group in the State. District Aboriginal advisory networks are being established as a forum for Aboriginal people to advise on the range of issues that impact on Aboriginal students. As part of the school development and accountability processes, districts are now monitoring the achievement of the improvement targets outlined in our planning and our schools' reconciliation strategy. We are very serious about improving the learning outcomes for Aboriginal students.

Increased devolution, or local management, needs to be accompanied by improved **accountability** measures. In recent years, school staff have become much more involved in processes of monitoring and planning for improvement and this has led to a more professional and collegiate approach to teaching and learning. Schools are increasingly aware of the need for sound quality assurance and school development processes based on school self-evaluation and school improvement. Processes whereby schools rigorously review their own performance and demonstrate to their local community that they are performing well are important for all schools, particularly those in more remote locations where comparisons with nearby schools are simply not possible.

There is also a need for a capacity, independent of individual school communities, to assure each school's performance. Such a capacity is now being put in place, so that as schools move down the local management continuum, there is an appropriate level of school accountability. As well, our award winning Monitoring Standards in Education Program provides system information about student performance in schools linked to benchmarks that are outcomes based. We are able to break down this system level information to find out about the performance of specific groups of students, for example Aboriginal students. We can use this information to ascertain their particular needs and plan accordingly.

Information **technology** is reshaping society and is now affecting almost every aspect of our daily lives. Technology is becoming a tool for learning and a means of access to sound educational programs. The State Government recently announced a \$100m initiative to provide learning technologies to *all* schools in Western Australia, achieving a computer ratio of 1:5 in government secondary schools and 1:10 in government primary schools over the next four years.

Technology 2000 is our strategic initiative to capitalise on the potential of information technology. The program has two overall objectives - to enhance education opportunities for students and teachers through the application of information technology in schools and to improve communication and management through the efficient and effective deployment of information systems and technology. We are establishing more networks and better communication.

Distance education has traditionally been provided in Western Australia by correspondence courses and schools of the air with their pedal radios. Our School of Isolated and Distance Education at Leederville is a leader in the use of technology as a way to overcome distance and isolation for many hundreds of students. Electronic delivery is now commonplace and students now enjoy immediate marking and feedback from their teachers rather than waiting for mail which must be collected, often from a centre hundreds of kilometres from their homes. A major award has recently been won by a gifted and talented program offered to country schools through video-conferencing from a school in Perth.

Satellite receivers are being installed in all country schools and district education offices so that they can receive a large range of television and radio broadcasts. Westlink is our own well-used state government channel and we use this to broadcast specific educational programs and more general information. Meetings of senior staff in Perth with staff in country areas are held via Westlink with a hook-up to enable school staff to ask questions during the broadcast.

**Incentives** have been necessary to attract and retain good staff in rural and isolated locations. Individual workplace agreements have been established with over 200 teachers in our 39 most remote locations. Among other things, the Remote Teaching Service offers teachers an improved salary package and more flexible and generous leave conditions in return for agreement to work at the same school for a minimum of three years. A decision by the Equal Opportunity Tribunal last year placed the spotlight right on our urgent need for a country incentives package. The decision sounded the death knell of the promotional transfer system. It meant that all positions would be filled on merit. Staff who had made the decision to take up country appointments in the expectation that they would be able to transfer back to the city

or to more favourable country locations, as a right rather than by winning a position on merit, would no longer be able to do so. Favourable transfer rights had been a powerful incentive. However a comprehensive package of incentives for teachers which builds on the success of the Remote Teaching Service package is now ready for implementation and will contribute substantially to the equality of provision of school education in country locations.

A new **Education Act** is being prepared. Provisions under the new Act will support local management. The Act will allow for more flexible schooling, giving principals the powers to be the key decision-makers at the local level and providing for more community involvement in school governance. The draft Bill firmly maintains the government school system, with all schools operating in accordance with system-wide frameworks.

We have improved services from **district offices**. The devolution process is supported by student services and curriculum services to schools in each district. As well, district directors work closely with principals and support schools in their efforts to improve performance. They lead educational improvement, assure the quality of the schools in the district and manage significant resources to support schools.

All of these changes and improvements involved careful consultation, improved communication and improved leadership. They advanced devolution and prepared the system for local management.

**Local Area Education Planning** is another key policy to ensure circumstances are right. It was important to implement a policy like Local Area Education Planning. This is the planning process that I term 'decision-making that really counts'. It is a process that has engendered a high level of community involvement and passionate debate. We have allowed for the reality that the Australian community is better informed today than ever before. People expect to be involved in the planning of government services, particularly those that involve their children. The Local Area Education Planning process exemplifies how local school communities are involved in the decisions about the delivery of schooling in their local area. The process is about identifying savings that can be made through selling land, amalgamating schools and reinvesting those dollars into schools as a social dividend.

Local Area Education Planning acts as a stimulus for internal school reform. For example, once the process leads to the creation of, say, a middle school or a senior campus, school communities then begin to ask all the questions that follow about pedagogy, the roles of the staff, school organisation and so on.

In getting the circumstances right and using resources better, the process provides community services for the needs articulated by that community. Local Area Education Planning is about reinvestment. Let me give you an example.

A few months ago announced that four senior high schools in Perth would close. Two secondary schools in adjoining affluent suburbs in Perth will amalgamate and move to a new and different school opening in 2001 on land between the two former schools.

The decision to amalgamate was based on a number of factors including long-term low enrolments at one of the schools. There have been unsuccessful attempts to bolster the numbers at the school by allowing the school to offer specialist programs. The other school involved in the amalgamation is a medium sized school with a reputation in the community of very good academic achievement.

The sale of the existing school sites will pay for the new school with some surplus funds. The new school will have an exciting design that reflects our heritage as well as looking into the future. It will also enjoy direct links with the nearby and prestigious University of Western Australia. The school will compete directly with the nearby high fee independent schools and become a lighthouse school for other government schools in the State.

The surplus funds will subsidise another exciting school development in a low socio economic area. By our normal planning criteria, this school should close and students relocate to neighbouring schools. However, the school is strategically located close to transport and a regional shopping area and taking this into account, as well as the need for government to provide services to the community, a plan was developed to provide a new middle school and a new senior campus on the site.

The school will have a clear enterprise, business and commerce focus. There will be strong involvement from the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Partnerships will be developed with small business, other training and higher education institutions, so that students have access to the best tuition and business expertise available.

In total, \$90m will be reinvested in the government school system in Western Australia by 2001. These are exciting opportunities, made possible by a planning process involving all the players.

## **LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS - DEVOLUTION IN WA**

And so to local management. The system is now ready for the next stage in the journey to improve schooling for Western Australian students.

In Western Australia the movement to increased flexibility and local management will be within the following parameters:

- choosing to change will be a school-level decision;
- schools will remain part of the Education Department, part of a government school system;
- all staff will continue to be employees of the Education Department;
- students' right to entry to a local school will be maintained;
- schools will be able to specialise in locally agreed areas of curriculum;
- there is not a preferred model of local management; and
- there is no set time-line or target for change.

The concept of local management of schools, is a simple one. It recognises that the community partnership between teachers and parents is significant and that schools know a great deal about designing educational programs and creating the right environment for the students in their community. It means letting go of some of the long standing rules about how central bureaucracies have allowed schools to manage their resources, money, time, people and buildings. The concept of local management of schools also emphasises leadership and accountability.

Of course freedom means responsibility and part of our job is formalising those responsibilities. States cannot do the job of managing complex community and local services

like schooling from a centralised base. There is always tension between education delivered as a locally managed community service and an education system that must be managed as a large public instrumentality.

When I consider locally managed schools, I also think of the capacity schools need to develop the school the community wants, the capacity to specialise and the capacity to provide real choices. Choice is only provided when there are discernible differences in the way schools operate.

Choice in our government school system, allowing schools to develop directions in response to community needs, is essential.

We will keep our infrastructure of support to schools. Our district offices, like the central office, will have different roles over time. But in a dispersed system like ours in Western Australia, district centres can provide critical support to those schools who need it.

Quite simply - decisions affecting individual school communities should be made as close as possible to those communities to enable improved efficiency, flexibility, choice and responsiveness. In some circumstances in Western Australia 'as close as possible to those communities' may mean the centre, or the nearest district education office.

Schools already have a good deal of power to provide programs that best suit the needs of the students in their care. However, once schools have made decisions about the education programs to be delivered, they need to ask the question: are there any barriers that will stop us from implementing these programs? Are there decisions being made by districts or the centre that need to be made at the school level to enable the school to implement their educational programs?

In Western Australia we are implementing devolution as a 'choosing to change' model, determined by school need.

All of our changes are part of a staged process. It is envisaged that the support being offered to all schools from districts today will contract in some districts over time, and stay the same



in others. It is likely that many metropolitan schools will want to be self-managing and want maximum resources being devolved to them directly, including those currently provided by districts. What I am saying is some districts will look very different in five years time to what they look like today. Many country or remote schools will continue to want support from a district as this will be the most effective way to meet the needs of their students – for them local management would exacerbate their remoteness and isolation.

In the Western Australian government school system, one size can't fit all - we will maintain a devolution continuum, based on the needs of school communities.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, to quote from (page 12 of) the Karmel Report:

*All-round improvements are more likely to emerge from experimentation with different approaches than from centralised manipulation of change. Given that people in the schools and the communities which they serve are different, a uniform pattern of change which, by its nature, will generally favour low risk as against high risk experimentation, is unlikely to be appropriate everywhere.*

Thank you.